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"LOVE IS GOD"

With best compliments

Smt. & Sri. A. AL. ALAGAPPA CHETTIAR

on the occasion of the marriage

of their son

Selvan: A. RAMASAMY

with

Selvi: ANNAPOORANI

on 30-11-1977

KARAIKUDI

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DAILY DIVINE DIGEST

BY
SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म

SRI RAMAKRISHNA TAPOVANAM
TIRUPPARAITTURAI - 639115
TIRUCHIRAPALLI DT., SOUTH INDIA.
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Religions are true to the extent they conform to Vedanta. Deviations from Vedanta shall have to be set aside as false doctrines. Reason leads man to Reality.

Applied Vedanta is called Yoga. It has four aspects :— (a) the Path of Action or Karma, (b) the Path of Self-control or Raja Yoga, (c) the Path of Devotion or Bhakti, (d) the Path of Knowledge or Jnana.

Tenets belonging to all the four paths are interspersed in this little book. Their being mixed up is a psychological necessity. As the change of diet is relishing to the tongue change of theme is refreshing to the mind. An ardent daily pursuit of a page in this book is bound to enrich the spiritual calibre of the aspirant. Pursuit is to be followed by reflection.

TIRUPPARAITTURAI
1—11—1974

CHIDBHAVANANDA

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January 1

ATONEMENT

The cosmos is one integrated unity. Variety in it does not come into conflict with its underlying unity.

Separatism and segregation are the ways of the ignorant. They are not in tune with the plan of Nature. Man progresses by harmonizing and by agreeably adjusting himself. By helping all and by promoting the general welfare man adds to his own prosperity. Assimilation leads him to plenitude.

Atonement is 'at-one-ment' or coming together. It is the way of the wise. It leads to enlightenment. It is called Ganesh Puja.

— Vedānta

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January 2

THE AUSPICES

Nature is full of obstacles to the inexperienced man. But as he attunes himself to the environment the seeming hurdles turn into auspices to him.

Man is born into this world to undergo training. As he progresses in self-culture the world presents a corresponding change of panorama. All ills become wells. Life is a great opportunity. It is full of auspices. Man is only to avail himself of them.

To the one tuned to perfection everything is auspicious. Auspices are within, auspices are without. Auspices are everywhere.

— *Vedānta*

January 3

SELF-MASTERY AND SELF-SURRENDER

Lord, may I gain mastery over my elements, good and bad. After perfecting myself may I surrender my individuality to you.

The commoner is the creature of the impulses of his mind. The yogi subdues the mind. In common with animal the common man craves for sense-pleasure. The yogi conquers that base urge. He then beholds the grandeur of the Almighty and makes himself over to Him.

As the atmosphere merges itself in space, when shall I be able to merge myself in the blissful Beyond?

— *Tāyumānavar*

January 4

LOVE

Love permeates the universe. Love is evident at all levels of life. It manifests itself as lust at the blooming physical level. As sex attraction it engenders jealousy, poisons the system and clouds the mind.

Pure love is constructive. It ever gives, never seeks. It is free from fear. He who practises pure love evolves in divinity.

Love makes life charming. It overcomes obstacles. It sanctifies the family. It unites the world. It beautifies the ugly. It converts hell into heaven. Let the mind be imbued with love.

The one established in love is established in godhood.

— *Tirumūlar*

January 5

THE BEE

Man has a lot to learn from the bee. It lives for the collective good of the hive. Selfishness is alien to it.

Between the bee and the house fly there is a world of difference. The latter now sits on pure edibles and next on filth. Whereas the bee alternates between its hive and fresh flowers. Nowhere else does it land. It is ever industrious. At any moment it offers its life in defence of the hive.

Live not a promiscuous life like that of the house fly. Live a pure, industrious and useful life like that of the bee.

— *Rāmakrishna*

January 6

DHARMA I

The word Dharma has no equivalent term in the other languages. A few at least of its connotations require to be studied.

The core of a thing is its dharma. The dharma of fire is to burn. The dharma of water is to wet. The dharma of life is to express itself. The dharma of the lion is to prey on the deer. The dharma of the deer is to flee to save its life. The dharma of man is to be a social being.

Dharma is the apt word for Hinduism. Dharma upholds the universe.

— Mahābhārata

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January 7

CONTROL OF THE SENSES

The senses, five in number, are so constituted that they range over objects outside. The man of sense-control has to see to it that their alighting on the objects ought to be in conformity with ethical codes.

The senses are usually turbulent. Like naughty children they misbehave with their objects. Vulgarity is norm with them. Persistently they require to be curbed. Arresting, checking, directing, suspending —all these methods should be adopted to tame the senses. Conquest of them is a great achievement.

When also, like a tortoise its limbs, the yogi can withdraw the senses from sense-objects, his wisdom is then set firm.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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January 8

ENDURANCE

The development of the power of endurance is part and parcel of life process. One has to cultivate it assiduously.

The plan of Nature is to impose hardship on beings now and then. Heat, cold, hunger, thirst, illness—these are the unavoidable conditions to which beings are subjected. The attitude with which they are faced is a moral training. Accepting these trials of nature with calmness and negotiating with them as a matter of course is endurance. The practice of this virtue builds character.

Mother Nature ever evinces endurance. May I, O Mother, acquire that virtue from you.

— *Tāyumānavar*

January 9

THE FLINT

It is through ignorance that man vegetates in base life. When the higher possibilities in life are known he is bound to rouse himself up to them.

A flint is age long buried in a brook. On that ground it does not lose its innate property. When brought out of water, dried and struck with a piece of iron, it emits sparks. Such is also man's innate being. It is not affected by his follies and blunders. He can resume his original purity at any time.

The wise one does not grieve, having known the bodiless, all-pervading supreme Atman who dwells in all impermanent bodies.

— *Vedānta*

January 10

HOLINESS I

Holiness is not a conventional title of any dignitary. It is the divinity latent in all. It can be made patent.

Religionists may hold that holiness is peculiar to their respective sects and unknown to the others. But the fact is it is inherent in all. Those that refrain from sensuality and hold fast to purity in thought, word and deed evolve in holiness.

The holy people are the salt of the earth. They shower benediction on society.

— *Mahābhārata*

January 11

GOOD TURN

Any trifling service voluntarily rendered to any person, known or unknown, is a good turn. Opportunity to do good turn is constantly presenting itself. Conceit or false notion of non-intervention prevents that neighbourly act. Whereas a friendly service betokens cordiality.

Willingness to be of some use to fellow-man is a godly gift. It removes estrangement. It engenders unity between man and man. Good turn elevates man to the benign.

O Lord, bliss dawns in me as I engage myself in good turn.

— Tāyumānavar

January 12

MIND AND MATTER

What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind. This was the old concept in regard to mind and matter. But they are one and the same. That is the truth.

Matter is gross and it occupies space. Matter in its subtlest form is mind. It is apparently all pervasive. Matter is insentient. Mind receives its sentience from the self even as the moon receives its luminosity from the sun. Mind is therefore a mighty power.

Man becomes great to the extent he grapples with his mind.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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January 13

IMMORTALITY

All beings, high and low, are mortal. They seek to avoid death. But there is no escape. Still, Immortality can be gained.

Man is actually the immortal Atman. He deludes himself into the belief that he is the body. Change and destruction are inherent in the body. The happenings in it are falsely attributed to the self. Detachment from body-consciousness is the means to attain Immortality. Spiritual discipline leads to this end.

From death lead us to Immortality.

— *Vedānta*

January 14

NARA YAJNA

Service to mankind is known as Nara Yajna. Treating man with dignity is a mark of culture and civilization.

Treating foreigners with contempt is the way of the semi-refined people. Exploiting the poverty-stricken people for low living wage is the mark of greed. Doling out charity to the idle indicates false sense of generosity. Helping man to help himself is right service.

Beholding humanity as the manifestation of Divinity and serving it on right lines is verily Nara Yajna.

— *Mahābhārata*

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January 15

OPPORTUNITY

The mediocre waits for an opportunity. The enthusiast makes opportunity. He is ever alert. He is up and doing.

To the ardent one every moment is an opportune time. He knows what to do when. When man makes himself competent he finds the doors open. In any field he can achieve anything. Providence is always beneficial. Man is only to avail himself of its bounty. Including the spiritual illumination everything is at man's disposal at all times.

O men of the world, come and join me in the ever-ready spiritual feast.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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January 16

PATIENCE

Man's attainments are in accordance with the patience he evinces. Patience is not inborn; it is cultivated. Conscious attempt at it is imperative.

Heat, cold, illness, discourtesy, calumny and such like factors give man opportunity to practise patience. Its acquisition requires to be reviewed now and then.

The anvil remains unaffected by the blows delivered by the sledge hammer. Even so the man of self-discipline remains proof against pain, trial and tribulation.

— *Rāmakrishna*

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January 17

STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS

A child is simple and straightforward in its behaviour. A cultured man ought to be likewise.

Crookedness and craftiness are characteristic of the foul dealer. But the fair dealer is guileless and frank. The foul deal contaminates the mind while the other cleanses it. There is no gift greater than the clean mind. The one intent on purifying the mind ought to be straightforward.

Harmonizing speech and action is the criterion for character building.

— *Rāmakrishna*

January 18

RIGHT ATTITUDE

As is one's attitude so is the reaction of thé world towards that individual.

The mirror faithfully reflects the expressions on the face. This world is something like a mirror. It responds precisely to man's relationship with it. Be kindly towards all and the world is kindly towards you. Take up a rough attitude and the world does likewise unto you.

Right attitude is the first condition to make the life on earth smooth and profitable.

— *Buddha*

January 19

VIRTUE

The difference between man and man is not in his origin or the profession of faith. It is in the intensity of his adherence to virtue.

The concept of virtue may vary from country to country. But its effect on character is the criterion. Whatever act weakens man physically, mentally, morally and spiritually is vice. That which strengthens man in body, mind and self is virtue. It builds the personality. It enriches the character.

Virtue engenders excellence. It is therefore to be fostered more than life.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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January 20

THE POWER OF THOUGHT

Power is potent in everything. Power stored up in the mind is incalculable. It expresses itself as thought. Thought can move mountain.

When the body falls ill its power weakens. The same is the case with the mind. When the mind is caught up with anger, envy, greed and lust it wanes into insignificance. When established in serenity, purity and continence its power waxes. As it thinks so does it achieve.

"Here I sit in meditation. The body may perish. The bones may dry up. The elements may vanish. But I shall not get up without enlightenment".

Buddha attained enlightenment this wise

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January 21

THE SPECTACLES

The spectacles are made to modify the vision. Mind also functions as the spectacles. As is the mind so is the view of the world.

When a man puts on green spectacles the world appears green. So is the case in regard to the other colours. Corrugated spectacles give distorted vision. Similarly, mind interprets the world as good or bad according to its disposition. There are as many interpretations of the world as there are minds.

Purify the spectacles of your mind and you will see the world is God.

— *Rāmakrishna*

January 22

QUIETUDE

All nature is in quietude at dawn and dusk. Let man take advantage of it and attune himself to that stillness for some time.

Ceaseless activity ruins the personality. Resting for a while recoups it. Nature is both kinetic and static. Man must take this lesson from her. He shall not wear himself out by toil. Overwork amounts to burning the candle at both ends. The knowing man balances between activity and quietude.

The man poised in the quietude of the self turns out the maximum work with minimum effort.

— *Mahābhārata*

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January 23

TRUTHFULNESS

The ordinary man thinks that he gains by telling lies. Whereas the profit of truthfulness is incalculable. Clean conscience is the immediate reward.

When the utterance comes into conflict with the occurrence it is a lie. That person is given to truthfulness who relates the happenings exactly as they are. The unpleasant incidents, the failures and the iniquities are all frankly admitted or confessed by the truthful man. Integrity elevates man to divinity.

Do not deviate from truthfulness.
Truthfulness builds man's character.

— *Vedānta*

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SUBLIMATION I

The energy of one kind can be converted into the energy of another kind. Nature does it and science also does it. It is open to man to do it.

Lust is a potential energy. Falling victim to it man damns himself. But by lusting for the service of mankind man sublimates himself. Anger is the foe of man. By allowing it to have its sway man reduces himself to nought. Let man be angry with himself for mediocrity. Then he pulls himself up.

It is possible for man to remodel himself on a superior pattern. Sublimation is the secret of self-amelioration.

— *Vedānta*

January 25

TIME

There is compensation for every other loss. There is no compensation for the loss of time. What is wasted is gone once for all.

Time is the interval between two incidents. It is without beginning and end. Man gets his quota in it. Foolish is he who does not know the value of time. He squanders it. Wise is he who accounts for it. By making the best use of time man builds his career. He who knows the value of time has known the secret of life.

I am the mighty world-destroying Time now engaged in wiping out the world.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

January 26

YOGA I

Yoga is not magic. There is no mystery in it. Making man wholesome is the purpose of yoga.

Very many people have false notions of yoga. They associate it with abnormality. According to them a yogi is not a social being. He owns miraculous powers. He is capable of supernatural help or hindrance. He is to be propitiated keeping at a safe distance from him. A view of this kind is born of ignorance.

Yoga is the science of Self. A yogi is the fully evolved man.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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January 27

SIMPLICITY

Nature in her entirety shines in her original simplicity. Man alone wantonly puts on complexity.

The schooling that the child gets leads it astray from simplicity. The social customs and manners cast the adolescent in rigidity and stiffness. The patriotism inculcated into man compels him to be partial. All progress in civilization tends to complicate man's mode of life. He loses simplicity which is the kingdom of heaven.

Man must revert to his original simplicity when he desires to know Brahman.

— *Vedānta*

January 28

UPRIGHTNESS

Clean deal elevates man. Foul deal debases him. His conscience is the recorder of both. An upright man sees into their relative value.

A wrong done in secret does not enjoy immunity any more than an unnoticed fire burn of the finger escapes harm. Right living under all circumstances behoves a clean person.

Uprightness begets excellence. Therefore uprightness ought to be fostered more than life.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

January 29

ABUNDANT JOY

The joy given by the things external comes and goes. Actually it is the joy innate in man transplaced on matters outside.

The glamour for the perceived objects must vanish. Mind should obtain quietude within. The senses must be put to rest. Then the joy within becomes evident. It is not to be sought. It is to be felt. It is unbroken and abundant. Man is heir to it.

The core of man is unbroken bliss. It is delusion to think that it gets broken at intervals.

— *Vedānta*

January 30

WORTHY CHANNEL

If the channel be properly constructed all the available water can be taken through it to the desired place. Nature can be taken advantage of in this wise.

The privilege of man is to become the channel of the Divine. For that the conditions have to be fulfilled. Egolessness is the bed of the channel. Moral integrity is the embankment. Pure mind is the material of the embankment. Disciplined life is its maintenance.

When man becomes the worthy channel Divinity manifests of its accord in and through him.

— *Vedānta*

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January 31

THE PROP

As children hold on to a pillar and circle round it, may I, O Lord, make you the prop of my life so that I may not fall.

Electricity energizes the bulb, the call bell, the heater and the motor. Energy is the prop to diverse contrivances useful to man. Sun as energy is the prop to life at all levels. When the sun cools down all manifest life will become dormant. When it is shining ceaselessly all beings maintain their individualities.

Brahman, the Pure Consciousness is the prop of the universe sentient and insentient.

— Vedānta

February 1

THE BODY-SHEATH

The self or atman is sheathed just as a sword is. Among the five sheaths assumed by atman the grossest is the physical body.

The worth of a fruit is initially judged by the appearance of its skin. Even so the fitness of a man may be studied by his physique. A strong body usually enshrines a sound person. Keeping the body robust is a sacred trust.

Yoga is possible to him who keeps the body virile and healthy.

— *Tirumūlar*

February 2

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW

A shadow is cast by a substance. As such it is impossible to have a shadow without a substance. But a substance can be without shadow.

Two birds are perched on a tree. The one above is majestic and selfcomposed. The other below feels happy and miserable eating sweet and bitter fruits. Seeing the sublimity of the bird above, it moves upwards. Finally it merges in the majestic bird just as the shadow merges in the substance.

The Jivatman or the individual soul is the shadow of Paramatman, the Cosmic Substance.

—Vedānta

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February 3

SPIRITUAL MAGNITUDE

Man can become many times greater than what he is now. He is only to resolve and act accordingly. He has to assert his original state.

Man can become great or small according to the use he makes of life. He who applies himself to small things wallows in them to the end. But he who switches on to the spiritual magnitude attains it. At the very start he becomes vibrant with new life. His personality grows in virtues unthought of. He reaps rich holy harvest.

Life is a dream. Dream that you are the immortal Atman and you become Atman.

— *Vedānta*

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February 4

ANGER

When man becomes a prey to anger he loses all refinement. He turns into a lunatic for the time being.

Spoilt ambrosia becomes poison. A sound mind is ambrosia. But when it is tainted with anger it turns into poison. An angry mind vomits vile thoughts. It transmutes the whole system into venom. The food consumed while in anger becomes injurious to health. An angry man's judgement is clouded.

Obstructed desire turns into anger. It is the worst enemy of man.

— *Vedānta*

February 5

CHARITY

It is charity to adjust to the ways of the neighbour. To be charitable to the needy is a divine gift.

Charity should not be born of ostentation and superiority complex. It should be the outcome of fellow feeling and humility. Misplaced charity does more harm than good. It is not charity to make the needy feel small and humiliated. To aid a man to help himself is the right kind of charity.

Blessed is the man who rids himself of egoism and self-importance through the charity he makes.

— *Vedānta*

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February 6

THE INSTRUMENT

The cosmic plan functions precisely. And that is the evidence of the existence of the Cosmic Ruler. Fortunate is the man who chooses to be an instrument of that Ruler.

The man who is the instrument of the Divine reigns without commanding. He is naive like a child. Still people conform to his decision. Because he voices the Divine Will. There is no place for doubt and deviation in it. Man the instrument bears testimony to the infallibility of the Wielder.

Renouncing all self-will, be an instrument in the hands of the Almighty. Great achievements and emancipation are possible that way.

— *Vedānta*

February 7

AUSTERITY

It is tapas or austerity when an aspirant resorts to recast himself in a spiritual mould. It is the sure means by which man regenerates.

It is tapas when thought, word and deed are thoroughly changed. Elevating ideas are alone to be entertained in the mind. The tongue ought not to utter anything but the divine. Bodily activities are all to be directed to this noble end. The whole career thereby undergoes a remarkable renovation.

Austerity is the means to change the material man into the spiritual man.

— *Vedānta*

February 8

DISTRESS

To be distressed at heart is the way of the world. Among the distresses that for self-perfection is the best.

Want precedes distress. To the extent want becomes acute distress assumes intensity. Some are distressed for want of money, others for want of sense pleasure, yet others for power and position. A rare few are distressed because they are not established in spiritual excellence. Blessed are such people, for they shall gain that perfection.

Lord, I know no rest until I become one with you.

— Tāyumānavar

February 9

RESPONSIBILITY

If anything goes wrong anywhere man blames someone for it. He tries to extricate himself from the affair. That is weakness.

A selfish man avoids responsibility. That attitude pulls him down. It is only by fulfilling duty that man prospers. A little screw has its function in the working of a machine. Every individual has his part to play in society. By faithfully discharging his dharma man acquits himself well.

Man is a member of society. He is not exclusively for himself. He must therefore rise equal to the task. Responsibility is Providence's test of man.

— *Mahābhārata*

February 10

THE CREMATION GROUND

The whole world is either a cremation ground or a grave yard. All beings are either cremated or buried. There is no escape.

Go alone occasionally to a grave yard and spend sometime reflecting on life. There you will learn much more than from books and sermons. Your attitude towards life will be chastened. Wisdom will dawn in you.

"You wayfarer, stop for a while. I was once in the state in which you are now. You will be once in the state in which I am now."

— Epitaph on a grave.

February 11

YOGA II

The difference between man and man is in his capacity to translate understanding into action.

Among the automobiles the best made car is the one that runs the longest distance for the given fuel. This fact applies to man also. He is the best trained man who produces the maximum result with the minimum effort. It is due to execution being tuned with understanding.

Work done to perfection is verily Yoga.

— Bhagavad Gita

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February 12

THE IDEAL

Man should not drift aimlessly. He ought to have a definite ideal in life. After fixing it his sole duty is to apply himself to it.

A man with an ideal in life has less chance of faltering than a man with no ideal. An aimless man is tossed about by circumstances just as a fallen dry leaf is blown about by the wind. An aimless man vegetates. A man with a set purpose in life is deliberate in his action.

The worth of a man is known by the effect of his effort.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

February 13

EQUILIBRIUM

A perfect balance maintains its equilibrium. A perfect mind it is that maintains its equilibrium under all circumstances.

This world is constituted of both happiness and misery. Obtaining the former to the exclusion of the latter is impossible. There should be no hankering after happiness. The unavoidable misery should be calmly put up with. A training of this kind brings in equilibrium to the mind.

Mental equilibrium gives enlightenment
Mental equilibrium wards off misery
Mental equilibrium engenders divinity
Mental equilibrium I shall maintain.

— *Tirumūlar*

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February 14

EGOISM

The baby is loved by all because there is no egoism in it. But with the development of egoism its love gets circumscribed. The highly evolved man outgrows egoism.

It is egoism when the self gets identified with the non-self. The body and its peculiarities are the non-self. He who rises above body-consciousness with all its appendages becomes perfect. His very demeanour bears evidence to it.

It is egoism that separates man from Divinity. When it is done away with, man becomes divine.

— Rāmakrishna

February 15

MAN'S EMINENCE

The growth of the body has its limit. It cannot exceed a certain stature, try however much man may. But the case of the mind is different. Its growth and possibilities are unlimited.

The age of an individual can be gauged by scanning his body. But the attainments of the mind cannot be studied that way. It transcends the bodily characteristics. Some are of exalted mind even in boyhood, while the others are childish even in advanced age.

As the lotus grows corresponding to the rise in the level of the water in the lake man's eminence lies in the urge in his mind.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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February 16

SACRED STUDY

Man should not turn into an intellectual dust bin. His tendency is to go through any and every book he comes by. The selection of books is as important as the selection of friends.

Wholesome food is procured by the discerning ones. The food for the mind is much more important than that for the body. Inspiring and elevating books require to be piously studied and pondered over. We contact great authors and holy men through their works.

Even as an intellectual study the study of Vedanta is the healthiest.

— *Vivekānanda*

February 17

THE WILL-POWER

The innate urge to assert one's individuality is called the will-power. It varies in degree from man to man. Strengthening the will-power is a virtue.

By willing to abstain from sense-indulgence man grows in stamina. By yielding to base urge man weakens his will. Self-discipline and the development of the will-power are concurrent. Cosmic Will is called God's Will. Attuning the individual will with the Cosmic Will is redemption.

Lord, thy will be done, not mine.

— *The Devotee*

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February 18

THE SPIRITUAL EYE

Perception varies with beings. A man is viewed as food by the tiger, as a friend or foe in the battlefield and as father by the son at home.

The cousins Yudhishthira and Duryodhana belonged to the same royal family. They were educated by the same Master Drona. They searched in the same world. The former could not find a single bad man in the world. The latter could not find a single good man. As is one's mind so is one's eye.

Holy men are gifted with the spiritual eye.
They cognize Divinity in the entire Creation.

— *Vedānta*

February 19

POVERTY

Poverty is not an extraneous factor. It is subjective. It is a defect in the mind.

Contentment and greed are opposed to each other. A man given to the former feels he is well provided. The available little amenities are more than sufficient unto him. But the latter is ever in want. However much he is heaped in wealth, he is still in dire poverty in mind.

The desireless are free from grief. The desireful are ever in poverty.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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February 20

RELIGION

Whosoever that practises religion is endowed with more merits and less demerits. Practice of religion is advocated by the great ones.

Mere formalism is not religion. Sectarianism is the negation of religion. True religion eliminates hatred, jealousy, greed, pride and selfishness. It engenders love of all beings, service to mankind and accommodativeness to the views and beliefs of the others. Self-denial, calmness and the adoration of the Almighty are its characteristics.

Practice of religion is the supreme purpose of the human birth.

— *Rāmakrishna*

February 21

ATTACHMENT

Attachment to things worldly is a virtue within certain bounds. It becomes a vice when one becomes incapable of detachment.

The mother needs be attached to her child. But if the child grows into an incorrigible rake she should be able to detach herself from him. That man lives well in the world, who is capable of both attachment and detachment.

Man grows in spiritual excellence when he gives up all attachments to sense-objects which are evanescent.

— *Vedānta*

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February 22

TAINT

Contact with an unwanted thing creates taint. The removal of a taint is harder than the restraint of it.

There is no harm in things getting tainted. They can be redressed as a matter of course. But the character of man should on no account be tainted. Even the taint made innocently lingers long in memory.

Divinity in taint is the human. The human free from taint is the Divinity.

— *Mahābhārata*

February 23

THE GOOD Vs. THE PLEASANT

Man takes a long time and makes a series of experiments to discover that the pleasant is seldom good.

Beings have evolved to the human level attracted by the pleasant. Now the pleasant has to give place to the good. The pleasant confines man to the sense-plane. It is by eschewing the pleasant that man grows in the good which is ethical eminence.

The good and the pleasant are not one and the same. The former leads to beatitude and the latter enmeshes man in the world.

— *Vedānta*

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February 24

DEATH

Death is a daily occurrence. There is no age limit to it. The earth-born may at any moment be snatched away. Still the wonder is, man thinks he will live through eternity.

A hundred years ago we were not. A hundred years hence we will not be. The years we have already lived have vanished like a dream. The remainder also will vanish likewise.

The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

— Bhagavad Gita

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February 25

RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

Perverted knowledge is worse than ignorance. It does havoc all through and creates misery.

All beings are constituted alike. What creates pain to one creates pain to all. What alleviates the suffering in one alleviates the suffering in all. The structural difference between man and the other beings is in degree, not in kind. Seeing the sameness in all is right understanding.

Wrong understanding leads to discord. Right understanding leads to harmony and union.

— Buddha

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February 26

SELF-POISE

When the equilibrium is disturbed, oscillation takes place for a while. This is true of the living beings too. All activities are meant to regain the lost poise.

The calm sea becomes boisterous when the gale blows. The mind similarly becomes restless when desire sets in. Frenzied activities take place. This unbalanced state of the mind needs quelling through discrimination.

Be free from the pairs of opposites, ever-balanced, unconcerned with getting and keeping and centred in the Self.

— Bhagavad Gita

February 27

YOGA—III

That man who frets and fumes over a given duty does very little work. Whereas a man who calmly applies himself to work achieves much.

The tiger is a powerful animal. But it cannot be yoked to any useful work because it is boisterous. And a bull can plough all day long because it is peaceful. The restless man cannot do continued work. The man of poise turns out immense work.

Equilibrium of the mind is verily yoga.

— Bhagavad Gita

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February 28

FEAR

Fear is the characteristic of the embodied ones. It increases along with physical evolution. The human born fears the most.

A sudden outburst of sound like the report of a gun creates fear. Loneliness and darkness evoke fear. Appearance of unknown persons and beings excites fear. New environment frightens the timid and the unwary. Imagination engenders fear.

Ignorance is the cause of all forms of fear. Enlightenment dispels it.

— *Vedānta*

February 29

CHARACTER

Every bit of work that man does leaves its impress on the mind. The sum total of these impresses is man's character.

Pleasure and pain leave their marks in the mind. Very often pain teaches a better lesson than pleasure does. Between success and failure it is the latter that rouses man up to the realities in life. In the training ground of the worldly existence man is to shape his character by lessons sweet and bitter.

Moulding the character into a mighty one is the supreme purpose of the human life.

— Vedānta

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March 1

HUMILITY

Humility is born of culture and refinement. The man of humility adores the good and great. He refrains from casting aspersions upon persons and matters partially known.

Self-debasement and demeaning oneself is not humility. It is the false notion of self-restraint prompted by ignorance. It shrinks the personality. Whereas humility is the outcome of enlightenment. It overflows with wisdom. It is the result of cognizing merit within and without. To be humble in spirit is the torch of enlightenment.

Corn with developed ears bends. Even so the man of mature understanding rests in humility.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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March 2

THE LIGHT

Clean acts are as explicit as light. They reveal themselves spontaneously. Fear of detection is not there. The face beams with delight when good deeds are resorted to.

Thieves dare not burgle into houses full of light. Darkness is their sphere. Even so base thoughts spring up in minds enshrouded in ignorance. When the heart is full of the light of wisdom undesirable thoughts do not steal in. Man is safe when the light within is shining steadily.

The lamp in the hand reveals the things outside. When shall I have the light within for self revelation.

— *Tāyumānavar*

March 3

MEDITATION

It is meditation when a concentrated thought flows incessantly towards its ideal. Any time is meditation time. But morning and evening are most suited to it.

Meditation is the means for man to develop his higher faculties. Meditation may be on anything noble and elevating. A landscape, a great idea, the sun, the lamp flame, effulgence in the heart—these are some of the common objects of meditation. The presence of Divinity in the heart is the best object of meditation.

Deep meditation leads to intuition.

— Yoga Philosophy

March 4

SELF–REFORM

Man is worried because his neighbours are not what he wants them to be. His disturbed state increases as he endeavours to bring them round to his way.

The wise man is self-analytic. He probes into his own being and spots out the defects. Along with the elimination of the evils within he emerges a reformed man, a blessing to his neighbours.

I long for the day when egoism will be erased, senses five in number, will be quelled and the self will be left to shine in its splendour.

— *Bhardrahari*

March 5

COMPETITION

Selfishness is characteristic of life at the low level. Each creature wants to thrive at the cost of the others. Cruel competition is the result.

Survival of the fittest is the order down below. Might is right, is in vogue. The weak ones are either eliminated or exploited. Misery is therefore on the increase. Nobody thinks of any remedial measure. Each wants to safeguard his own interest.

Unhealthy and selfish competition mars social life. Healthy and selfless competition promotes social welfare.

— Mahābhārata

March 6

DHARMA II

It is by the performance of dharma that the fulfilment of life takes place.

The dharma of the student is to increase his knowledge. The dharma of the teacher is to impart knowledge. The dharma of the workman is to toil to the best of his ability. The dharma of man is to exert his best for common good.

The dharma of one man is as sacred as that of another.

— *Mahābhārata*

March 7

SIN

Labelling man as born sinner is the sin that theologian has committed against mankind. Man verily is born divinity.

Man is made of action (karma) not sin. The child acts; it does not sin. That act which depraves man is sin. He sins because of ignorance. With enlightenment he can nullify his bad acts. Every time man is made to repent for his sin, he is forced to create that sin again mentally.

As light dispels darkness, holy thought destroys sin. Lord, may I be ever endowed with the thought of you.

— *Tāyumānavar*

March 8

TEARS

Tears are the external indication of the distress at heart. Distress is unavoidable to the embodied. Man surely sheds more tears than the other creatures do.

Water softens the soil. Being softened it becomes fit for cultivation. Vegetation of any kind is possible in the moist land. Dry land is as useless as the desert. That man who is incapable of tears is as bad as the parched up land. It is the man who sheds tears that develops fine elements. Character is chastened with tears.

I long for the day when the tears of sorrow would cease and tears of bliss would commence.

— *Tāyumānavar*

March 9

DESIRELESSNESS

Desire is the devil that tortures man day and night. All acquisitions other than the bare needs are actuated by desire.

Man thinks he cannot progress without desire. The real progress is in curbing desire. Nature's bounty is ever at the disposal of man. Being established in desirelessness he can inherit it.

Misery is not for them rid of desire. It is endless to them fallen into the snare of desire.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

March 10

PURE LOVE

The baby embodies pure love. It is not tainted by any earthly consideration. The love of the baby appeals to all alike. Serpents even become docile in the presence of the baby.

Pure love knows no competition. The love of the child is an example; but not the love of the lovers. Pure love knows no fear. A mother facing any danger to save her baby bears evidence to it. Pure love makes no bargain. The sacrifice made by a true friend testifies to this fact.

Pure Love is equated with God. A man of pure love alone can be a benefactor.

— *Mahābhārata*

March 11

FAITH

Confidence in oneself, devotion to the ideal, genuine effort to serve the ideal, all these put together is faith.

Fickle-mindedness is the opposite of faith. Doubt, vagueness of purpose and slovenly execution are the traits of a person lacking in faith. Whereas a man of faith is constant. He is up and doing. He is all earnestness and application to the ideal. Obstructions only increase his faith.

Nothing is impossible to the man of adamant faith.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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March 12

THE GEM

Whatever is of excellent quality is valued as a gem. Man ought to become a gem in his own way.

The value of a gem is not increased by encasing it in a velvet inlaid gold chest. Its value is not decreased by misplacing it in a dust bin. A man of sterling character remains the same in praise and censure, in recognition and non-recognition, in fame and ill-fame.

Brahman is called Gem because of Its superiority and luminosity.

— *Vedānta*

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March 13

THE ORIGIN

Existence does not come from non-existence. The unmanifest reality assumes manifestation. That process is called creation.

Parents are the origin of the progeny. Sons and daughters are therefore obliged to adore them. Homage to the origin sanctifies the offspring. The entire creation has its source in Divinity. By worshipping the Root Cause of his being, man evolves in Divinity.

I am the origin of all; from Me all things evolve. The wise know this and adore Me with all their heart.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

March 14

RESOURCEFULNESS

To be stranded is the way of the dullard. To be resourceful is the way of the one ever active and alert.

As the fisherman throws the net in the river a few fish flee far off. They are the most resourceful. After being caught in the net some cleverly jump out while the others lie helpless. A resourceful man sees ahead and adopts measures to ward off obstacles. It is given to some to be timely resourceful. A clever General saves his army from total destruction.

The impossible becomes possible to the one endowed with resourcefulness.

— Tiruvalluvar

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March 15

HUMANITY

Creation is profound. A study of it elevates the student. In it humanity occupies a unique position. Knowing mankind is as sacred as knowing the Creator.

A reverential approach to mankind is essential. Humanity has to be studied solemnly. Relationship with man has to be made in a spirit of respect. This attitude would raise man to an eminent height.

The manifest universe is permeated with divinity. Recognition of it gives sanctity to humanity in particular.

— *Vedānta*

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March 16

BLISS

Lord, you are Bliss. Your presence in my heart is self-evident. If not for Bliss, who will care to live ?

Because of Bliss beings hold on to life. They toil seeking Bliss. In friendship they find Bliss. They make sacrifice to find Bliss. It is Bliss alone that cannot be renounced.

Bliss is Reality.

— *Vedānta*

March 17

AVERSION TO EVIL

Evil is that which mars man's make up. Sometimes evil to one may be good to another. Whatever is evil to the spiritual aspirant, needs be eschewed as poison.

Nature is a mixture of good and evil. What is good at a point of view is evil at another point of view. Fire is good when it cooks food. It is bad when it burns a house. Discrimination is to be used in sorting out the evil. Hatred is bad; but hatred of evil is to be cultivated.

O Lord, who are beyond the ken of the wicked, may you be pleased to cleanse me of all evils.

— *Tāyumānavar*

March 18

COMPLEX

The unwanted attitude of the mind is called a complex. Many are the complexes haunting the mind. The inferiority complex and the superiority complex are most harmful among them.

The one exposed to social tyranny, pinching poverty and indoctrinated negative ideas develops inferiority complex. The one fostered in assumed lineage, luxury and privileges puts on superiority complex. There is no spiritual redemption to the one entangled in superiority complex.

He who recognizes that it is Divinity that sports as the manifest universe and the beings high and low, rises above all complexes.

— Vedānta

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March 19

EXPANSION

Existence is common both to the sentient and the insentient. But in the expression thereof there is difference. The latter merely exists. It cannot exert or grow.

Whereas the sentient is aware of itself and of its environment. It transforms existence into life. It grows and evolves. It unfolds its potency.

Man stands foremost among the sentient. He makes life deliberate and purposeful. He enriches it according to plan.

Expansion is life; contraction is death.

— *Vivekānanda*

March 20

MAN'S ENEMIES

The external enemies are not so dangerous as the internal ones. The latter remain concealed and cause untold havoc.

Diseases of the body are no doubt enemies. They are bound to be detected sooner or later. But the diseases of the mind pose as friends and are therefore undetectable. Likes and dislikes seem part and parcel of the personality. But they are the perpetrators of all evils.

Let not anyone come under the sway of the senses given to attachment and aversion. Attachment and aversion are verily man's enemies.

—Bhagavad Gita

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March 21

THE DELIBERATE DEPARTURE

All beings are overtaken by death sooner or later. But the yogi alone does not die. He prepares himself and deliberately quits the body.

Death is meaningless to the yogi. He holds the body alien to him all along. He dwells in it as the others dwell in houses. Detached from the body and established in the Self he is. When karma is worked out the body falls.

All the gates of the body closed, the mind confined within the heart, having fixed his life-energy in the head, uttering 'Om' he who departs leaving the body, attains the Supreme Goal.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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March 22

FEAR OF THE ENEMY

All creatures have their enemies. Man has more enemies than the other beings. Fear of the enemy is part and parcel of life.

Those creatures that are incapable of distinguishing between friend and foe fall easy prey to the latter. Protection against the onslaught of the enemy is therefore the prime concern of the life on earth. Man has to fear his own species as much as the born enemies like the lion, tiger and snake.

Fear of the enemy is one of the factors that goad beings evolve into higher and yet higher orders.

— *Vedānta*

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March 23

DHARMA III

Notion of ugliness is in the defective mind. It is not in the work done by man.

The ascetic performs asceticism. The woman serves her husband loyally. The scavenger cleanses the dirt and filth. These are all phases of dharma. The one is as important and indispensable as the other. It is incorrect to behold the one as divine and eschew the other as debasing.

When viewed as dharma all secular activities metamorphose into the sacred.

— Mahābhārata

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March 24

CONSISTENCY

Innocent inconsistency is as bad as deliberate inconsistency. It splits up the personality of man.

Harmonizing the thought, word and deed is consistency. Thoughts ought to be noble and elevating. The words that a man utters should be quite in tune with his thoughts. Finally his doings shall be the gross manifestation of his noble intention. This done the man's character becomes sterling.

You grieve for those who should not be grieved for; yet you spell words of wisdom.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

March 25

YAJNA OR SACRIFICE I

Motivated karma binds man to the wheel of birth and death. Karma done as an offering liberates him.

Selfish karma is a fetter. Self-less karma is Yajna. It frees man from all bondages. It is spontaneous. That man who gifts with a bounteous heart is the performer of Yajna. It seems a sacrifice. But it is actually the pouring forth of the person that ennobles man.

The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of Yajna. Therefore earnestly perform action for Yajna alone, free from attachment.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

March 26

THE APPARENT AND THE REAL

Man is constituted of the apparent and the Real. Evaluation of these two enables right living.

Body is apparent. It is the perishing reality. Babyhood, childhood, youthhood, maturity, old age, death—these modifications are characteristic of the body. The self is the persisting reality. It undergoes no change. Man is to safeguard the body until its annihilation and constantly cherish the self.

Be fixed in the thought that you are the immortal Atman.

— *Vedānta*

March 27

GOOD CONDUCT

A being selects the food congenial to it. Even so may I have recourse to the conduct that ennobles me.

As there are graduations in food there are modifications in good conduct. That behaviour is good which promotes excellence. To play with toys is good for babies; but it is not so for the adults. Seeking property and sense-enjoyment is sanctioned to the commoner; but it is prohibited to the holy ones. That is good conduct which lifts man up.

Good conduct is that which purifies the mind.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

March 28

BUOYANCY

Sickness in body is unavoidable. Whereas sickness in mind is inexcusable. It is brought about through ignorance.

Dejection, melancholy, low spirits—these are all diseases of the mind. They lead to stagnation and deterioration. There is another kind of mental defect. It consists of light-heartedness, tomfoolery and hilarity. The one given to these does not grow in the grasp of high thoughts. Buoyancy is what is wanted. In the serene sobriety man evolves in intellect.

He who is unattached everywhere, who is not delighted at receiving good nor dejected at coming by evil, is poised in wisdom.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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March 29

HABIT

When something is repeatedly done it becomes a habit. Man can make or mar his career by the force of habit. It has its effect even on animals.

Habit is the most potential factor in man's life. Habit is said to be man's second nature. Therefore man has the power to change both his habit and his nature.In carving a new career man is never too late. If he resolves, in a day he can change his habit. Following it his nature changes.

Lord, grant me the boon of holding on to the habit of resigning myself to you constantly.

— *Tāyumānavar*

March 30

VAGARY

Mind is vagrant and quixotic. Its ways can never be predicted. It is capable of any act from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Man makes use of a mirror to find out if his face is presentable. But his face is the index of his mind. It requires to be studied first. If the mind rids itself of its fickleness, then the face becomes pleasing to all.

I long for the day when the vagaries of the mind will be vanquished and union with bliss be established.

— Tāyumānavar

March 31

THE WONDER

A man was wandering over the world in search of the mother earth. The wonder of it was he was all along on the lap of the mother earth.

The Self is constant. The non-self is fleeting. The Self is the recorder. The non-self is accepted and rejected. The Self is the witness. The non-self is sometimes present and at other times absent. Negligence of the Self is the wonder of wonders.

I have not absolved the apparent self in the Real Self; and this is the wonder.

— Tāyumānavar

April 1

UNFOLDMENT

Nature at all levels is unfolding her possibilities. Because of this unfoldment her grandeur is made evident to one and all.

A seed seems lifeless. When cultivated it unfolds unthought of possibilities. Man also does the same. Babes are all mere babes. But with the passage of time they unfold all types ranging from stones, blocks and criminals up to god-men. The human unfoldment is the most comprehensive.

The unfoldment of Divinity is the greatest act open to mankind.

— Vedānta

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April 2

THE DESTROYER OF PAIN

Tasting of pain leads to discrimination. He who has not suffered pain knows not life in all its aspects.

Every bit of pain has its cause behind it. It comes as a warning to the sufferer. Deviation from the right path is the source of pain. It should be carefully looked into and the cause rectified. Right living is the annihilator of pain.

For him who is moderate in eating and recreation, temperate in his actions, who is regulated in sleep and wakefulness, Yoga becomes the destroyer of pain.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

April 3

THY WILL

The Cosmic Will is both intransigent and infallible. He who conforms to it never goes wrong. He is free from anxiety.

A good servant gives himself over to the master. He makes no bargain with the master. When the salary is reduced or withheld he does not complain. He ever serves well. The master's responsibility increases in his case. God is the master. The devotee is the good servant and he never comes to grief.

Lord, thy will be done, not mine.

— *The Devotee*

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April 4

ENLIGHTENMENT

All beings seek to know more and more. Man must profitably increase his knowledge.

The knowledge of the non-self or the phenomenon is useful. But the knowledge of the self or Atman is elevating. Problems in life decrease in proportion to the enlightenment in Atman. Being fixed in Atman is the means to increase enlightenment. Fixation in Atman and enlightenment are one and the same.

From ignorance lead me to enlightenment.

— Vedānta

April 5

YOGA IV

Cattle go wherever they are driven. Man's views change dominated by intellectual gales. Such a man is no better than beast.

Propagandists and preachers come to impose their ideas on you. It is gentlemanly to receive and allow them have their say. Calmly investigate their views. If any so called holy utterances contain unholy ideas refuse to accept them.

Man's intellect gets tossed by conflicting opinions. But when he remains poised in the midst of them, he is said to have got into yoga.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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April 6

EVIL

Avoid evil and do good is the injunction of all religions. But it is difficult to distinguish the good from the evil.

There is no act whatsoever in Nature, which is completely free from evil. When we eat we deprive another of food or life. We shall have to choose those acts which are more benevolent and less malevolent and perform them devoutly.

One should not abandon one's duty though it is attended with evil. All undertakings are enveloped by evil as fire by smoke.

—Bhagavad Gita

April 7

WAVES IN THE MIND

The mind is compared to a lake. Thought wave in the one is similar to the water wave in the other. Thoughts screen the self as waves screen the bed of the lake from view. Man soars up in bliss as he stills the thought waves.

Stilling the mind is well-nigh impossible. Countless impressions remain suppressed in it. As the thoughts on the surface are vacated those at the bottom rise up ceaselessly. Calmness prevails to the extent the mind modifications are eliminated.

All miracles are possible; but pacifying the mind is the hardest. Lord may I achieve it by Thy grace.

— *Tāyumānavar*

April 8

SELF-DEDICATION

Self-dedication is very much like a drop of rain water falling into the ocean. Surrendering one's own individuality on larger interest takes place voluntarily.

Self-seeking is the order at the lower strata. There is a seeming benefit in it. But the seeker gets stuck to what he seeks. The mother gives her all to the baby. Thereby she evolves in motherhood. Even so the dedicated person to divinity evolves in divinity.

They alone live who live for others. The others are more dead than alive.

— *Vivekānanda*

April 9

PLACIDITY

Keeping the mind placid under all circumstances is a virtue. As the ocean is calm at the bottom let the mind be still in the midst of sensation outside.

Provocation by the external forces cannot be prevented. But refusing to be provoked is entirely in one's own hands. The mind should be so tuned that it maintains its own placidity in all eventualities. Wretched is the man who is tossed about by alien happenings.

The path is full of thorns. One method is to cleanse it and another to put on shoes. People are sometimes offensive. Be not affected by their offence.

— *Rāmakrishna*

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April 10

THE THIEF

The thief refrains from his evil act in the presence of the police. The mind is a worse thief. In the absence of vigil it does great havoc. It requires to be watched over.

The thief dares not enter a lighted house. The thief of the base thought does not enter the heart lit with God-consciousness.

Lord, I am a thief hiding myself from you. But in calm moments you remind me of your presence in my heart and seek to reclaim me.

— Tāyumānavar

April 11

NON-INJURY

One creature hurting another is a common occurrence among the low order of creation. Uncivilized men sport in it. But mercy to beings is the mark of civilization.

The law of life is uniform. Harm done to onself is keenly felt. It is a personal experience. That the same is the feeling of the fellow-beings requires to be realized. Knowing that what is painful to you is painful to all other beings, treat them all exactly as you treat yourself.

The whole creation pays homage to that holy man who is established in non-injury.

— Yoga Philosophy

April 12

MUD-FISH

Earthly existence has its snares and set-backs. There is no escape from them. Still man has to avail himself of it and prosper as best he can.

Water is the only element in which fish thrives. Fish out of water gets into trouble. But mud-fish is a species flourishing more in mud than in water. However, its shining body is not tarnished by the dirt of mud.

This world is full of evils. All the same, you can progress in it even as the mud-fish thrives in mud.

— Rāmakrishna

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April 13

PESSIMISM

He is a pessimist who views the world as degenerating from bad to worse. This is a harmful negative attitude.

The world is always a mixture of good and evil. Sometimes good is prominent and at other times evil. Man is to avail himself of both for self-discipline. As the tree utilizes all the seasons to its advantage man is to make use of the changing world in order to build his character.

To the knowing man this world is the best training-ground for self-culture.

— *Vedānta*

April 14

KARMA Vs CONFESSION

Medicine cures certain illness. Attitude modifies certain melancholy. But there are ailments which cannot be cured.

Certain indoctrinated religions say that all sins are pardoned when confessed to an authorized conventional priest. But the law of karma says that man cannot escape the effects of his acts, good and bad. Through penance certain bad acts may be counteracted. The so-called pardoning a sin is an indirect licence to it.

Man reaps what he sows.

— Jesus Christ

April 15

THE QUEST

Beings are all in quest of one thing or another. The pursuit is endless. As one quest is fulfilled another quest crops up.

The quests of birds and beasts are limited. But the quests of man are unlimited. He is ever agitated over them. Achievement of one pursuit leads to the creation of several others. The search for them goes on vigorously. Man is over-burdened with quests. The discerning man minimizes them.

Lord, all my quests come to an end on the day I get enlightenment of Thee.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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April 16

TRUTH

Truth is enshrined in my heart. It is constant and therefore it is called Truth. It sustains life. It illumines the heart.

Truth reveals what is contained in the heart. Truth can never be nullified. The persisting and the perishing are both mixed up in the heart. Persistently the perishing are to be removed from the heart. Then the persisting Reality shines in its splendour. And that is Truth.

He who is not false to what is in his heart becomes the votary of Truth. Thereby he gains a place in the hearts of all.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

April 17

JUDGEMENT

Dubbing one as bad and boosting another as good is the way of the world. Such a flippant judgement mars the intellectual growth of man.

No one is all good and no one is all bad. And what one has known of another is meagre. In fact nobody has known himself fully. Still he hastens to judge others. In his attempt to assess others he exposes his own limitations. The wise people are friendly with all, but they do not seek to judge any.

The judgement that one makes indicates one's enlightenment.

— *Mahābhārata*

April 18

THE LIFE-SHEATH

Atman or the self is sheathed with life (prana) which is subtler than the body. Among the five sheaths this is the second. Life is self-expressive.

The inert matter exists. The living organ grows. Man is endowed with life. It should neither vegetate nor stagnate. Through proper effort life can be enriched. Life in the lower orders is self-centered. Life in man ought to be made serviceable to the fellow-beings.

Life is not to be wasted away. It should be made vibrant and purposeful.

— *Vedānta*

April 19

RIGHT EXTROVERT

All the five senses are so constituted that they perceive the external world. But the right perception is based on the right disposition.

Enslaved by taste the fish gets hooked. Being enamoured of a blazing fire the moth rushes to perish in it. The sense of hearing snares the deer. Smell lures the beetle. The elephant gets caught trusting in the sense of touch of the tame elephant. Man perishes tempted by all the five senses. Sublimating the five senses is the right extrovert.

A worldly man looks at his wife with one disposition and his daughter with another. A holy man looks at all of them with a divine disposition.

— *Rāmakrishna*

April 20

VIRILITY

It is in the hands of man to conserve himself to a high purpose or to dissipate himself in harmful pleasures.

Manliness should mark man and not faint-heartedness. Determination should reign supreme and not timidity. A good cause should be championed firmly; it should not be shirked with indifference. Man grows in calibre as he utilizes his potentialities for good causes.

Thou art virility; vouchsafe me with virility.

— *Vedānta*

April 21

SUBLIMATION II

Immense is the scope of man to elevate himself to a divine level. Sublimating the senses is the means to it.

The eyes should be trained to see the auspicious only and refrain from the vulgar. The ears ought to hear wholesome ideas. The tongue shall utter chaste words. The sense of touch shall be completely under check. Pure food alone is to be partaken of moderately.

It is Yoga when man gains complete mastery over the senses. He develops intuition thereby.

— Vedānta

April 22

ACHIEVEMENT

Nature reveals that all creatures achieve something or other in life. Man stands foremost among them.

Life on earth is not an empty dream. Objects that enrich life are sought after and they are obtained. Achievement is sometimes delayed. Impatience on that score is itself an impediment. Patience is to be practised. Knowledge is thereby on the increase. Man is gaining mastery over the elements. He turns adverse elements to his advantage. His achievements are innumerable.

Self-mastery is the greatest achievement. Thereby the mortal becomes immortal.

— *Tāyumānavar*

April 23

STRENGTH

It behoves man to be strong in body and mind. Strength makes life purposeful and productive. It eliminates obstructions and problems.

Strength is both of body and mind. Exercise promotes physical strength. Upright living engenders mental strength. There is no limit to mental strength. Will can move mountain refers to mental vigour. Weakness is death. Strength is life.

Yield not, O Partha, to feebleness. It ill befits you. Abandon this petty faint-heartedness. Wake up to valour.

— Bhagavad Gita

April 24

BODY AND MIND

Body and mind are interrelated. It is mind in the subtle state, and body in the gross.

When the body becomes weak or sickly, there is a corresponding effect on the mind. When liquor is taken mind becomes tipsy. Similarly anger and hatred in the mind makes the body poisonous. Sorrow and lamentation in the mind wrecks the body. A balanced mind tones the body.

Keep the body strong and healthy. Keep the mind calm and serene.

— *Yoga philosophy*

April 25

PRINCIPLE Vs PERSONALITY

The ordinary man is taught to be personality bound. Whereas the right course consists in being principle bound.

I love people because my Master's commandment is so. This is personality based moral code. I love people because love is the basis of life. This is principle based moral code. Personality basis has its limitations. Principle basis is perfect and universal.

A personality is great to the extent he embodies principle.

— *Vedānta*

April 26

NON-COVETOUSNESS

The tendency to grab another's property is inborn in man. It is the legacy of the animal instinct from which man has evolved. Aiding the others acquire wealth is the sure means of reaching the state of non-covetousness.

Pilfering, stealing, deceiving, profiteering, appropriating the found and unclaimed articles—these are all marks of covetousness. Man must earn his living by honest means. He must be satisfied with his own earnings. This is non-covetousness.

Mother Nature is bounteous to the man who is established in non-covetousness.

— Yoga philosophy

April 27

THE MENTAL SHEATH

Man is one who owns the mind, the third sheath. Feeling is the function of the mind. No creature feels so intensely as man does.

Feeling is both positive and negative. Happiness is positive and sorrow negative. Love is positive and hatred negative. Positive emotions promote health and growth. Negative feelings destroy them. The mental sheath makes or mars man's career.

He who has mastery over the mind is the monarch unto himself.

— Buddha

Koviloor Acadamy

April 28

INTROVERT

The mind that is habituated to be associated with the five senses must learn to dissociate itself from them. It is a great lesson.

While the eyes are wide open the mind must refuse to see. While the audiomessage is pouring in from all sides man should learn to turn a deaf ear to them. Abandoning all the five senses to themselves when the mind revels in great thoughts within, then its training is complete. The man with such a disciplined mind is an introvert.

When also, like a tortoise its limbs, he can withdraw the senses from sense-objects his wisdom is then set firm.

— Bhagavad Gita

April 29

HOLINESS II

There is holiness in the baby because it retains its wholesomeness. The universal adoration of holiness is the evidence that all have emanated from it.

Man has unwittingly made himself unholy by profligacy. It is evident in his being split up into insignificant personalities. But it is open to him to redo himself. All frailties are temporary set-backs. It is never too late to mend oneself.

There is holiness pervading the whole of the universe. He alone can perceive it who is himself established in holiness.

— *Tāyumānavar*

April 30

GIFT

Be a gift-maker; be not a gift-recipient. Receiving aid for a public cause is permitted. Accepting aid for personal benefit is demeaning.

The man who seeks benefaction or charity shrinks in mind. He loses his independence. Indebtedness makes him small. The free and kind giver ever grows stalwart in mind. His resources also expand.

Give with earnestness. Give liberally. Give with concern that your gift may not become useless. Give with all modesty. Give studying the merit of the cause.

— Vedānta

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May 1

FEAR OF THE ELEMENTS

The elements are as much foes to beings as they are friends. And that is the paradox in life on earth.

The earth is called mother earth because she brings up and nourishes beings. But an earthquake or a volcano swallows them up wholesale. Flood, fire, cyclone — these are the other frowns of nature that man dreads. Warring with them takes away much of his time, energy and resources.

Natural calamities are quite common. Man has to learn to brave them instead of fearing them or complaining to God against them.

— *Vedānta*

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May 2

THE ENEMY

All creatures under the sun have their enemies. Combating with the enemy is the greatest problem in life. Progress consists in keeping the enemy at bay.

Man has the greatest number of enemies both in his species and outside. But he should not be out to ravage the foe. His culture consists in being moderate and considerate in handling the enemy. Resistance must be combined with charity.

The yogi outgrows all enmity. Dharmaputra was the enemy of none. Therefore no enemy could damp his virtuous career.

— Mahābhārata

May 3

THE DISCIPLE I

A disciple is one who puts himself under discipline. The more rigorous the discipline, the better disciple he becomes.

It is very difficult to be a disciple. He should be able to surrender his individuality to the master. Implicit obedience is the criterion. Loyalty to the core makes the best disciple. In such a one the prototype of the master develops. A model disciple alone becomes a good master later on.

Seek that enlightenment by prostrating, by listening and by service; the wise, the seers into the Truth will instruct you in that knowledge.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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May 4

PRAYER

As the battery can be recharged mind can be filled with divinity. Prayer is the vehicle that conveys man to the Divine Presence.

A beggar becomes small by begging. A devotee begs and becomes whole by praying. Prayer sanctifies the mind. It purifies the aspirant. Verbal repetition is not prayer. The outpourings of the heart is prayer. Petitioning for mundane things is not prayer. Seeking the Divine is prayer.

Prayer it is when the mind is attuned to the Cosmic Reality and thereby its higher possibilities are invoked.

— Vedānta

May 5

THE COMPASS NEEDLE

Officiousness it is to give attention to all and sundry. One-pointed absorption in the ideal makes one wholesome.

Do not fizzle out your energy on paltry things. Conserve it for a noble purpose. Make the means and the end meet. Devote yourself completely to the achievement of a noble purpose in life.

The ship may be tossed about by the gale, but the compass needle in it always points to the north. Even so be you devoted to the ideal in life in all circumstances.

— Rāmakrishna

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May 6

DHARMA IV

The seeming evil action is not always so. It is sometimes recognized and extolled as a meritorious act.

Vibheeshana of the Ramayana fame revolted against his own brother Ravana and helped Rama win the war. Bheeshma of the Mahabharata fame fought valiantly for the wicked Duryodhana and fell. The questionable acts of these two heroes are revered by the wise as holy performances.

Mysterious is the way of dharma. Sometimes its import cannot easily be delved into.

— Bhagavad Gita

May 7

CONTINENCE

Progenitive urge otherwise called the sex attraction is a powerful force. Life seems worth living for its sake. Man stakes his all on it. But he who sublimates this urge becomes divine.

The pleasure derived from sex indulgence is momentary. But the price paid for it is enormous. Man shatters his make up. Inch by inch he annihilates his personality. Experience is the great teacher in this respect. Continence on the other hand makes him superman.

Complete conquest of the senses is yoga. It leads to the build of spiritual excellence.

— Vedānta

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May 8

SOLITUDE

Solitude is sought by some but shunned by many. It is a boon to some while it is a punishment to many. Its worth or otherwise requires to be studied.

Solitude or privacy for a while is welcome to all. It is an occasion to review the contents of the mind. The thought that bubbles foremost when one is left to oneself indicates the stuff that one is made of. For self-analysis solitude is the only means. What food is to the body, solitude is to the mind. It is to be resorted to stage by stage.

He who delights in solitude is on the way to self-perfection.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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May 9

THE MATERIAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

Man requires to know his make up. True knowledge makes life productive. It leads man to emancipation.

Man's life in the material world is not an aimless dream. It affords him facilities to enrich his career. It meets his needs temporarily. It is the best training ground where hard lessons on life are effectively taught. No happiness can be had here without paying the price in the form of misery.

Man is not the body. He is atman (self) residing in the material body.

— *Vedānta*

May 10

DISCRIMINATION

It is discrimination to distinguish between the permanent and the fleeting. Sense pleasures are not only evanescent but they are also damning the self.

A flock of sheep was driven to be butchered. The creatures were frisking on the way unaware of their heading for destruction. Similarly man is day after day nearing death. Unaware of the pending danger he goes hunting after happiness. He will do well to discern his position here.

The man of discrimination knows for certain that this earthly existence is as perishable as a bubble on water.

— *Vedānta*

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May 11

PEACE

All beings love peace because it is their original state. It is in peace alone that social progress is possible. Peace is the criterion for mutual understanding and cordial relationship.

Elements in nature are usually at peace. Occasionally they are in turmoil, pressed hard for readjustment. Beings resort to strife because of compulsion. Peace-makers among men are the salt of the earth.

Peace follows enlightenment. When man establishes peace at heart no external force can disturb it.

— *Vedānta*

May 12

THE INNER LIGHT

Man is blessed with the inner light. The physical eye does not and cannot see it. The light within cognizes itself. It cognizes the things outside.

The inner light is constant. It reveals itself through the glass of the mind. The defects in the mind seemingly blur the light within. But actually the light remains ever unaffected by the modifications of the mind. Man ought to ignore the limitations of the mind and seek to get fixed in the inner light.

Lord, You are the Inner Light; lead me to the Inner Light.

— *Vedānta*

May 13

THE GROSS AND THE SUBTLE

Man is constituted of the body and the mind. The gross aspect is the body and the subtle, the mind. Both the aspects require to be kept fit.

When the body is affected its effect is on the mind too. Similarly any change in the mind makes a corresponding effect on the body. Sorrow in the mind for example pulls down the other. Of the two the mind is more powerful. It is so because the subtle governs the gross. When the mind is kept buoyant the body responds to be hale and hearty.

Keep the body virile and the mind serene.

— Vedānta

May 14

FEAR OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Concept of the supernatural is peculiar to mankind. Animals and birds are free from it. Fear of the supernatural is instinctive in man.

Ghosts, devils and spirits are freely believed in by mankind. Stories pertaining to them are prevalent everywhere. Dread of them is traditionally maintained. A man dares not go alone at the dead of night into a grave yard. Fear of the disembodied has such a grip on him.

Ghosts and goblins are all the creation of the credulous mind. They have no external reality.

— Vedānta

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May 15

DHARMA V.

The goal of life is to transcend all karma, bad and good. Doing dharma or the sanctioned act is the means to it.

The performer of the duty becomes eligible for pension. Even so it is the man of action that becomes fit to reach the state of actionlessness. Man qualifies himself in the world of action and then transcends into that which is all peace. The phenomenal existence is the means to enter into the noumenal beatitude.

Renounce all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sins; grieve not.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

May 16

CLEANLINESS

Physical cleanliness and that of the house can be had very easily. But the cleanliness of the mind is hard to attain.

Very many people are not clean in mind. Unwanted thoughts and base feelings constantly crop up within. They remain concealed from others. But the conscience within is aware of them. Unclean thoughts are to be diligently driven out. To be pure in thought, word and deed is cleanliness.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

— *Jesus Christ*

May 17

ARCHITECT

Nature is the embodiment of beauty. It is possible for man to enhance that beauty by a touch here and a readjustment there. Man is therefore a born architect.

It is to the credit of man that he has converted a desert into a garden of Eden and a sickly and desolate place into a health resort. Turning his attention on himself man can improve his health, make the body robust, turn the mind congenial and divinize his entire career.

Man is the architect of his own destiny.

—Bhagavad Gita

May 18

THE WATCHMAN

May I be provided with the watchman of discrimination. Then there is no missing the way or going astray. Life will be straightforward and evil-proof.

When all are sound asleep at the dead of night the thief tries to steal in. But if the watchman be awake and alert he dares not break into the house. When discrimination is sharp the burglar of base thought does not steal in.

To them, ever devout, worshipping Me with love, I give the yoga of discrimination by which they come to Me.

— Bhagavad Gita

May 19

BRIGHTNESS

Brightness of the personality is a boon worth having. It is not a gift come from any extraneous source, but it is an unfoldment from within.

He who lives a clean and cheerful life develops brightness. Delinquency combined with melancholy annuls it. Choosing between the dull depression and the gay brightness is in the hands of man. When one rouses oneself up to the higher possibilities in life, brightness follows suit.

Brightness thou art; endow me with brightness.

— *Vedānta*

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May 20

VICTORY

It is victory when a country is delivered from despotism. In a contest fair play is all in all; Victory is beside the point.

Unscrupulous acquisition of a thing is not victory. It is fraudulence. Defeating the weak and the ignorant is not victory. It is plunder. Fair acquisition by fair play is victory. Gaining victory over a strong opponent is manliness.

The wise consider the vanquishment of the wicked as victory. They consider the putting down of the base propensities as victory.

— Mahābhārata

May 21

TRANQUILLITY

A man is said to be tranquil when he remains undisturbed by a tempest outside. The inner poise is its own reward. It refuses to associate itself with the turmoil elsewhere.

There are people who suffer from self-created disturbances. A passing incident is a momentous problem to them. That attitude should be avoided. The stability within ought to remain firm as a rock. Billows do not disturb a rock. Even so the trespassing thoughts shall not assail the poise within.

He is a karma yogi who enjoys the tranquillity of the mountain cave while being engaged in the toils of the city.

— *Vivekānanda*

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May 22

JNANA YAJNA

Jnana Yajna or the Sacrifice of Knowledge it is when man carries enlightenment to the ardent. Among the gifts it is the foremost.

Man blunders due to ignorance. Man also suffers due to ignorance. Right understanding is the panacea for all maladies. It brings in immediate relief. That man who endows people with knowledge is the true benefactor. Money can be misused; but wisdom can never be misused. It enriches life.

The welfare of society is based on sacrifice. The best among the sacrifices is the giving of knowledge.

— Bhagavad Gita

May 23

SUBLIMATION III

Fatalists say that man has to wait for another birth to make himself a superman. The awakened ones say that now, here they can remould themselves into divinities.

As the old iron can be melted and recast into a new mould man can at any time completely transform himself into a highly evolved entity. Mind is capable of a magic change in a moment. Along with it the entire personality changes.

Realizing that he is Atman man undergoes total sublimation even now.

— *Vedānta*

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May 24

SEEKING LIBERATION

Bondage of any kind is a stigma to beings. They struggle to liberate themselves. Man in particular wants to rid himself of all barriers.

Man is able to realize some day that he is not the body. He is the immortal self enshrined in the body. All limitations belong to the body and not to the self. Transcending the body consciousness is liberation. In Self-knowledge the shackles of the body such as birth and death are dropped off.

As the snake is different from its slough man the self is different from his body. He ought to seek liberation from the sheath called the body.

— *Rāmakrishna*

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May 25

ADORATION

Mind is constantly undergoing modification. It takes the characteristics of the object it adores.

White cloth can be dyed in any colour. Such is the way of the mind. It can assume any trait, good or bad. As such the ideal set before it should be great. God is held to be the repository of everything good. Adoration of God is therefore salutary. Worshipping Him with all fervour hastens the purification of the mind.

Saints attained their sanctity through the adoration of the Omniscient.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

May 26

THE BOAT

The day the primitive man contrived the boat he made a long stride in his conquest of Nature.

The boat can be used only in water and not on land. The boat may be in water but no water should get into the boat. Earthly life is similar to the boat on water. Man may live in the world. But worldly desire should not get into his heart. It will drown him. All misery is due to earthly desire.

Be in the world, but be not of the world if you want bliss.

— *Rāmakrishna*

May 27

QUIT YE LIKE MEN

Birds and beasts come into the world in their true colours and quit the world in their true colours. But man alone is not faithful to his make.

Observe a hundred tigers. All of them reveal the tiger nature. Do the same with snakes, doves and cows. They are all found faithful to their species. But man is an exception. In the human physique are encaged tigers, serpents, doves and cattle. There are also angels in the human temple.

The virtue of man is his manhood. Let him become a superman before he quits the world.

— *Mahābhārata*

May 28

NON-POSSESSION

While the birds and beasts move about free from entanglement man alone cannot travel easily because of his possessions. Increased ownership is viewed a mark of civilization.

By multiplying his wants man is adding to his cares and worries. Greed for excessive wealth gnaws at his heart. Anxiety about protecting the superfluous belongings wrecks his mind. As over-eating ruins the body extra-possession hardens the heart. Such a man becomes alien to calm living and high thinking.

Sufficient unto the day is evil enough thereof.

— Jesus Christ

May 29

PRACTICAL WISDOM

Some are born with practical wisdom. Others acquire it by right living. But it never comes to the calculator and the disputer.

Gaining in practical wisdom is very easy. Man must divest himself of all complexities. He ought to resume the baby's simplicity. The promptings of conscience alone should be spoken. A cheerful calmness is to be maintained always. Then the native genius sprouts. It is called practical wisdom.

Those that sanctify their thought, word and deed with holiness and truthfulness evolve spontaneously in wisdom.

— *Mahābhārata*

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May 30

INVOCATION

We rouse up the inert matter by polarization, magnetization, electrification and so on. We rouse up the living beings by invocation.

The forces of nature are invoked by mechanical means. The unknown persons are invoked into friendship. The gods are invoked by propitiation. God is invoked by prayer and devotion. Invocation is the means of creating link with the good and the great.

When invoked the dormant spiritual power in man becomes dynamic and vibrant.

— *Vedānta*

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May 31

FEAR OF DISEASE

Disease is an unavoidable factor of life. Birds and beasts quietly put up with it while man gets upset when it develops.

A disease like fever comes to eliminate the bad matter in the system. Instead of giving it scope to do its scavenging work man out of fear hastens to suppress it with medicine. It reappears as some other disease. Fear of ill health is on the increase.

Refusing to be mentally affected by the disease of the body is the sure means of healing it quickly.

— *Mahābhārata*

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June 1

LITTLE CHILD

This old world ever looks new. The constant coming in of the little children is the mark of its being new.

This world is not free from miracle. The presence of little child is the presence of Divinity. There is no miracle greater than this. The wicked man puts off his wickedness in the presence of a little child and resumes his original Bliss. So does everyone when one comes to the august presence of the little one.

When one becomes a sage that one rebecomes a little child mentally.

— *Vedānta*

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June 2

THE MUSK-DEER

Our senses are so constituted that we seek for substances extraneous to us. They are of no use for self-analysis.

The musk-deer produces musk in its own body. But in search of the fragrance of that stuff, it wanders about. Man's position is akin to it. He has Divinity enshrined in himself. But he seeks for It in regions other than himself. Whatever he seeks for is in himself.

Lord, when shall I clarify my understanding and realize your presence in me ?

— Tāyumānavar

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June 3

GROWTH

Growth is characteristic of life. It is the urge from within for expansion and self-expression. A being grows by assimilating things external to it.

Physical growth is common to all embodied beings. One species grows into another and thereby evolution takes place. There is limit to man's physical growth. But his mental growth is ceaseless till death. Reincarnation promotes further growth.

When the mental growth of man expands into infinitude his individuality merges in the Absolute Reality–Brahman.

— *Vedānta*

June 4

SPEECH

Speech directed to the glorification of the Maker is a form of worship. It is also worship when directed to the enlightenment of mankind.

Let there be clarity in speech. It is a disease to be a chatter-box. Learning to hold the tongue is the first lesson in life. The profitable alone should be spoken in sweet words. Impose not your views on the others. Brevity is the source of wisdom. Let the others hanker to hear more from you.

If you should speak, speak what is benevolent. Speak not what is malevolent.

— Tiruvalluvar

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June 5

THE INTELLECTUAL SHEATH

Intellect is the fourth sheath. The function of the intellect is to interpret a thing in its true light. Man is endowed with that faculty.

The light of the self comes out through the inner organ of knowledge. The modification in that organ accounts for the differences in the readings of the same object. One says there is no good man in this world. Another says there is no bad man in this world. The reading is based on man's disposition.

As the seer purifies his instrument of seeing the object seen assumes clarity.

— *Vedānta*

June 6

THE TEMPLE

The whole universe is the temple revealing the Cosmic Intelligence. Man's body is the temple enshrining the individual self.

Because of the abuse or misuse of the body the self within remains enshrouded. As the body gets cleansed of the base propensities the self manifests itself lucidly. The duty of man is to hold the body in trust for a noble purpose. Keeping it holy is the greatest act.

Ye are the temple of God.

— Jesus Christ

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June 7

COMMON SENSE

It is common sense to reconcile oneself with the infallible laws of Nature.

The fanatic runs riot against what is not to his liking. He wants all to take to his line of action. But what is good to one need not necessarily be good to another. The conflicting customs and manners are all good in their respective settings. The saint and the savage conform to their attainments. Recognizing various standards among people is common sense.

Common sense is the most uncommon commodity in the world.

— *Mahābhārata*

June 8

REMORSEFULNESS

Affliction with anguish is a destructive force. It shatters the personality, clouds the understanding and ruins the talents. But the spiritual anguish has a toning effect on the character.

Defects, failures and disappointments in life are inevitable. But on that ground man should not sink in an endless sorrow. He is to outgrow anguish as quickly as possible. For it gnaws at the personality as a whole. Whereas the remorsefulness that one is not progressing in the act of self-perfection adds to one's ethical growth.

Blessed are the distressed in heart for the kingdom of heaven for they shall be consoled.

— *Jesus Christ*

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June 9

BATHING

Bathing is an act that not only cleanses the body, but it also tones up the mind. It is one among the several acts associated with the worship of the Maker.

Birds and beasts bathe instinctively when they become dirty or when they feel the weather oppressive. Man bathes deliberately and regularly in order to maintain cleanliness. Religious bath is superior to it. It purifies the body and sanctifies the mind. Bathing the mind everyday in holiness is peculiar to the spiritual aspirant.

O Lord, may I be bathed ever in the thought of Thee and in the love of beings.

— Tāyumānavar

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June 10

HEALING

Man goes on causing wounds; Nature goes on healing them.

If there was no healing power in Nature the world would become ugly very soon. The wholesomeness patent in the world is all due to the power of healing evinced by her. Resorting to sympathy, kind words and service, man can hasten the healing of the wounded mind.

Among the healing agencies time stands foremost. It pushes the atrocities of man to the background.

— Mahābhārata

June 11

IMPRISONMENT

The criminal is imprisoned by the government concerned. The crooked is imprisoned by his own caprices. Both the types are unfit for society.

The silk-worm imprisons itself in a self-made cocoon for self-emancipation. But the sophisticated man imprisons himself in his likes and dislikes and thereby cripples his personality. Instead of expanding his life he enmeshes it. Man should not vegetate in life. He should flower and fruit.

Lord, when shall I be able to free myself from the bondages of the capricious mind?

— *Tāyumānavar*

June 12

THE AGED

The young are bound to become the aged in future. There is no escape from it. But there is a right way of becoming aged.

Those who are attached to life do not want to age. They hide their age and pose to be young. Fighting shy of aging is not the way of the wise. Seekers of knowledge and wisdom attach importance to old age. They gain access to the aged and not to the young. They revere the aged.

The aged in experience are the most useful members of society.

— Mahābhārata

June 13

THE SACRED

There are people, places and books to be viewed sacred. By doing so an aspirant grows in the benign. He is on the path to sacredness.

It is the attitude that counts. Very often what is sacred to one is sacrilege to another. While holding an attitude as personal and private, care should be taken not to hurt the sentiment of another. Regard for the neighbour's beliefs and practices is in itself sacred. To the truly great everything is sacred.

Bow your head in reverence to what the others hold sacred. You stand to gain thereby.

— *Rāmakrishna*

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June 14

GREED

Multiplying the desire is the bane of humanity. Day in, day out man suffers most from the disease called greed. It eats into his body and mind.

Tempest in the mind is created by the gale of greed, which has a death-grip on man. Calm reflexion reveals that with the reduction of greed man regenerates himself. He is at his best when all desires are quelled. The baby grows well because there is no desire in it. That man makes the best of life who is free from desire.

Greedlessness is godliness.

— *Tāyumānavar*

June 15

FEAR OF WAR

War is inevitable among all beings at all levels. But the fear of war is marked in man.

War rids the world of many evils. It brings down over population. It sets right several social evils. But the modern warfare does not confine itself to the war field. It seeks to destroy the civil population also. Therefore it is dreaded today.

It is a virtue to maintain mental calmness even when the city is sacked.

— *Mahābhārata*

June 16

EATING

Some people live to eat while the others eat to live. Enjoyment is the goal of the former and the achievement of an ideal is the object of the latter.

Over-eating and under-eating are both bad. The over-eater becomes a dullard and the under-eater a weakling. Measured eating is like tuning a veena. If the wire in the veena be over-tightened it snaps; if it be loosened the required music would not come out of it. Moderate eating is beneficial.

The devotee holds eating as an act of worship of the Lord within.

— *Vedānta*

June 17

DRAVYA YAJNA

The acquisition of money and the proper utilization of it go by the name of Dravya Yajna or the sacrifice of wealth.

Money has the purchasing power. It ought to be earned by honest means. The higher law of life demands that the major portion of it be utilized in the public weal. Hoarding wealth corrupts the mind. Voluntary disbursement of it on good causes purifies the mind.

Good citizen is he who earns money by noble profession and spends it for the welfare of mankind.

— *Rāmakrishna*

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June 18

THE CHOSEN IDEAL

A man without an ideal in life is like a boat without a rudder. He drifts to uncertainties. Whereas a man with an ideal is definite in purpose. He acts precisely.

The chosen ideal should be something noble and elevating. The wicked choose to cause hindrances to as many as possible. The virtuous choose to serve others. They evolve into extraordinary merits and attainments. Great ideals are necessarily exacting.

All great men rose in excellence because of their unswerving devotion to the ideal to which they dedicated themselves.

— *Mahābhārata*

June 19

VEXATION

Vexation is a common disease of mankind. For one reason or another all are vexed. They have to be cured of this illness.

Vexation has its external and internal causes. The real trouble is in the internal causes. Mind creates its own problems and is vexed over them. The self-created problems have to be dissolved by discrimination. Scrutiny is the only means to cure them. When the mind becomes whole it will not be affected by the external vexation as well.

The ups and downs in life do not affect saints. Their mind is always tuned to the sublime.

— Tiruvalluvar

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June 20

A TOOL

The importance of a tool lies in the use to which it is put. A highly useful tool is reduced to nothing if it is not properly availed of.

This world is so constituted that everything in it is useful to one purpose or another. Turning a thing into a tool is the outcome of right understanding. Even a blade of grass is an implement to a talented man. The greatest use to which man can put himself is in being a tool in the hands of Providence.

The more man surrenders his ego the better tool he becomes of the Lord of the Universe.

— *Vedānta*

June 21

FREEDOM I

All beings are struggling for freedom in one form or another. Bondage or restriction is misery. Freedom or self-sufficiency is happiness.

Freedom from hunger and thirst is a motive power common to all beings. Nature has placed this limitation on them. They are trying to extricate themselves. Ignorance is a bondage. They search for that knowledge which frees them.

When I am self-contained and self-sufficient there is nothing in the universe to interfere with my freedom.

— *Buddha*

June 22

SILENCE

Practice of silence is imperative. It pacifies man's nature. It increases knowledge. It leads to spirituality.

Man should not be always talkative. At appointed times he should observe strict silence as a holy act. It is not enough if the tongue be held. The restive mind needs be put to rest. Then it gains in power and clarity. It is actually refreshed. It is for this reason that sages practise long silence.

Among things profound I am silence.

— Bhagavad Gita

June 23

DISPASSION

To be carried away by the sense pleasures is the way of creatures. But man is to conquer base nature and grow in dispassion.

As the iron filings are drawn by the magnet, mind is fascinated by the sense objects. But the evil in them is to be instilled constantly into the enamoured mind. This is a laborious task. Still it has to be gone through by the aspirant.

All the tempting agencies in the world attractively arrayed in the court of the king Janaka could not lure the mind of Suka because he was established in dispassion.

— Bhāgavata

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June 24

REASON

Reason is a gift come to man from God. Proper use of it is a form of spiritual discipline. It is a mighty instrument to arrive at Truth.

A correct balance weighs things accurately. Such is also the function of reason. Beliefs vary. Creeds do not concur. Sacred books are divided in opinion. In the midst of these differences reason is the only method to arrive at right understanding. Reason alone is common to all.

The man who resorts to reason must be an impartial seeker after truth. Pure reason leads man to Reality.

— Vedānta

June 25

SUPER-CAREER

Lord, while my feet are planted on earth, may my thought, word and deed soar into realms sublime.

Super-ethical life lifts man into exalted spheres. Noble attitude and refined feelings then take shape. Man becomes superman. New powers develop in him. The world seems to him the arena for the unfoldment of divine possibilities. He dedicates his sanctified life for the good of all. He views life a blessing.

My Divine Father's august Presence is at a dizzy height. I long for the day when I shall gain access to Him and be absorbed in Him.

— *Tāyumānavar*

June 26

PARTIALITY

The balance weighs the same way to one and all. The law of nature is impartial in dealing out the fruits of action.

There is fairness in the functioning of Nature. There is no partiality in her. Defiance of her principles leads to misery and defeat. Conforming to them brings in happiness. It is partiality if there be no punishment for transgression and no reward for righteousness. Absence of partiality is the grandeur in Nature.

Partiality is the way of the biased. Impartiality is the way of the virtuous.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

June 27

THE MILCH COW OF DESIRES

Heaven is spoken of in the mythology as the place provided with Kamadhenu, the milch cow of desires. Whatever man desires in heaven comes to him as a matter of course.

Heaven is not of the earth. Pure mind is verily heaven. A man of pure mind does not desire for petty things. His search is always for things sublime. His bounteous mind finds the world full of divine equipments. He is simply to avail himself of them.

All the noble things of the world are at the disposal of a highly evolved man.

— *Vedānta*

June 28

FREEDOM II

Freedom requires to be distinguished from the semblance of it. Unrestricted way of life is anything but freedom.

The senses tend to undermine disciplined life. They seek indulgence which is ruinous to the body and mind. Freedom for the senses is the way of the libertine. Freedom from the senses is the way of the man of self-control. He gains in brilliance and plenitude.

Complete conquest of the senses is known as yoga. Then the yogi gains freedom from all vagaries of mind.

— Vedānta

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June 29

INTUITION

Knowledge of the world increases with the addition of each sense. Whereas intuition reveals the true perspective of the known world.

The vegetable kingdom thrives prompted by impulse. Birds and beasts get on well goaded by instinct. Man progresses guided by intellect. Perverted intellect arrests his onward march. Intuition posits that it is Divinity that sports as the phenomenal world.

Intuition is not a freak of nature. Man develops it through self-culture. Sublimation of life leads to intuition.

— *Vedānta*

June 30

LAZINESS

Laziness is born of ignorance. It is fostered by inertia. The duration of this disease depends upon the disposition of the patient. It may be cured this moment or it may drag on lifelong.

Nature is never lazy. Neither is she ever flurried. Steadily, charmingly and majestically she carries on her cosmic work. Punctuality of Nature and the planets' movements are identical.

Those intent on prospering in life must surely do away with laziness.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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July 1

FEAR OF OLD AGE

Stealthily old age overtakes all beings; and they reconcile themselves with it. But man alone fears it most.

Barring them who meet with premature death, all have to face old age. That is the period to reflect on the evanescence of earthly life and to mature in wisdom. Instead man abhors old age and tries to arrest it. Vain is his attempt.

Changes in life are to be accepted as calmly as the changes in season.

— *Mahābhārata*

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July 2

EVALUATION

A thing in itself is neither valuable nor paltry. Man imagines its value. Very often he errs in estimating things.

Man values diamond more than gold. But fire test would prove the opposite. All beings hug life and shun death. But death consumes them all. The inquirer into death is rare. He who analyses death attains immortality.

The knower of Brahman knows It as the Source of both life and death. There is nothing to compare with Brahman.

— Vedānta

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July 3

THE DIVINE SOURCE

As all rivers have their sources on hills all beings have Divinity as their Source. They require to be reminded of this truth.

Keeping a heavy purse in his pocket a man dreams that he is stranded penniless in a foreign country. The situation changes when he wakes up. The same is the position of the man who has forgotten his divine origin. Becoming conscious of the Divine Source solves all problems.

It is through ignorance I disconnected myself from the Divine Source. I am all bliss the moment I bring in the connection.

— Tāyumānavar

July 4

OPTIMISM

Man is a born optimist. While yet a youth he entertains golden dreams. He hopes to make a heaven of this earth.

This world is not all good as the optimist fancies. It has its limitations. Man may make use of it to improve his lot. He is justified in availing himself of any sphere to build and refine his character. The more he seeks self-perfection the better it is for him.

By viewing the world as divine and by serving it with humility and cheerfulness man grows in divinity.

— *Vedānta*

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July 5

THE SECULAR

That outlook is said to be secular which views the world as the sphere where personal pleasures and possessions are sought. It engenders cruel competition and corruption.

What seems as the secular world is actually the Divinity. As man purifies his attitude the perceived world reveals to him its innate Divinity. Sanctifying the secular is the means to purify the mind and to realize the truth that whatever exists is Divinity.

It is the Lord who has put on the appearance of this phenomenal world.

— *Vedānta*

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July 6

THE GIVER OF ALL

Man must have his needs supplied if he is to thrive in life. The supply comes as the need rises. This is the law of life.

Mother Nature is the giver of all to the entire creation. No creature goes without its wants being supplied. Man can receive his ethical and spiritual succour from her if he seeks them. It is wise to obtain the best from the giver of all.

The Creator of all is also the Giver of everything to all according to their merits.

— *Vedānta*

July 7

CONSUMING POISON

Nectar and poison are both available in Nature. Partaking of nectar and shunning poison is the way of the world. But there are a few who dare to convert poison into nectar.

Man eats food and excretes it as dung. Earth purifies that poison. Man drinks water and rejects it as urine. Sun evaporates and turns it into rain water. The impure air exhaled by man is purified by the vegetable kingdom. Nature performs this eternal scavenging.

Ridding society of certain deep-rooted evils is as exacting as consuming poison. Still some benefactors stake their lives for it.

— Mahābhārata

July 8

THE BASIS

The foundation protects the building against storm, flood and earthquake. The Pure Consciousness is the basis of man's fleeting individuality.

The celestials and the mortals are no lasting protection to man. His own self-effort disintegrates when confronted with crisis. His constant link with Pure Consciousness is the lasting Basis of his being. Constant remembrance of this truth recoups him.

While the body and the mind are in a state of flux, the Self, the Basis is constant.

— Tāyumānavar

July 9

THE ALTAR

That place becomes an altar where holy thoughts take their origin. Utilizing such a place for holy communion proves congenial.

Do not make the mistake of differentiating between the altar of one religion and that of another. Cultivate regard for the place where man turns his attention to the supra-mundane power. By joining the spiritual amateurs the spiritual adult does not lose any of his attainments.

The heart is the altar. Consciousness is the deity.Being absorbed in it is the worship.

— Tirumūlar

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July 10

CONGENIAL FOOD

Both the body and the mind require to be nourished with food. Pure food is to be preferred by those intent on ethical and spiritual excellence.

The body may be nourished with any food other than those that are intoxicating, irritant and damaging to digestion. The mind is fed through the senses. See the good and keep aloof from the bad. Hear the auspicious and avoid the vulgar utterance. Noble thought is the direct congenial food for the mind.

May the organs of my body, speech, sight, hearing, functions of the vital energy, strength as well as the other senses become perfect.

— *Vedānta*

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July 11

THE KEY

Problems of life are kept locked up within the heart. The key to open the lock is also kept within the heart. The solution must come from within.

Man's life is the projection of his mind. All problems are created by the mind. The removal of the problem is again in the hands of the mind. To a sensible mind the unlocking of the hard chest is not difficult. But to a foolish mind there is no end to the problems. Life is a hurdle.

A perfect mind is the key that unlocks the mysteries of life. The purer the mind the easier is the solution.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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July 12

SELF-DEDICATION II

Give and take is the policy of the ordinary people. But there are a rare few who ever serve others. They forget themselves in the service of others.

While competition is the scheme at the lower order of creation, self-dedication reigns supreme at the top. Technically it is called yajna. The enlightened man has everything to contribute for the public welfare. He seeks nothing for himself. He is verily the salt of the earth.

They alone live who live for the welfare of others. The others are more dead than alive.

— *Vivekānanda*

July 13

GUILELESSNESS

A guileful mind is crafty and deceitful. It misinterprets things. But an innocent mind sees things as they are. It delights in its straight behaviour.

There is a world of difference between the wrong attitude and the right attitude. The one carps and the other communes. The one suspects and the other submits. There is a blissful ease in the bearing of a guileless person. His dealings are frank and spontaneous. There is a self-sufficiency in him.

May I be as guileless as a baby. Thereby I inherit Beatitude.

— *Tāyumānavar*

July 14

THE LOTUS LEAF

Things in Nature have their lessons to teach man. The lotus leaf is one such. It suggests the way in which man should live in the world.

The lotus leaf thrives on water. There must be enough of water for it to float on. Still it does not get wet. Even so man thrives on karma. Without it he will perish. But he should not get affected by it. Detached activity is possible. And it elevates man.

He who acts, abandoning attachment, dedicating his deeds to the Cosmic Reality, is untainted by karma as a lotus leaf by water.

— Bhagavad Gita

July 15

FEAR OF DEATH

All beings dread death when they are in its grip. Man alone looks ahead and fears it in expectation.

But for death the world will not maintain its newness. Casting off the old and worn out body and assuming a new one is the law of reincarnation. This applies to all beings. Evolution is possible through death. Fear of death is meaningless to the enlightened.

The self goes on changing its body through death until the phenomenal existence is transcended.

— *Vedānta*

July 16

CONTROL OF THE MIND

Mind is the subtlest and the most fleeting thing. Control of it is therefore the hardest. He who subdues the mind becomes divine.

Siva is symbolically put as the wielder of a deer which represents the mind. The one is as fickle as the other. A grip of either is imperative. As the deer under grip is made to gaze at the face of Siva the mind in reins ought to be engaged in hallowed thoughts. It is through tight occupation that mind can be broken in.

The mind is no doubt restless and hard to control. But it can be controlled by practice and nonattachment.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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July 17

HEAVEN AND HELL

The credulous people are made to believe that there is a heaven presided over by a personal God and also a hell created by him. He will place the good in heaven and the bad in hell. This theory is spurious.

Good action brings good results which man enjoys. Bad action brings bad results from which man suffers. Man is the maker of heaven and hell. He carries them in his own mind. There is no external agency meddling with him.

Priestcraft creates the external heaven and hell and trades on them. The ignorant and the credulous pay heavily to gain the one and escape from the other.

— *Vedānta*

July 18

PLEASING THE PROVIDENCE

O Lord, extolling you to the skies is an empty praise. But doing your will is the real worship that pleases you.

Two gardeners were employed. One of them idled away the time. Whenever the master appeared before him he started glorifying him. The other had no time to talk with the master. He busied himself in improving upon the garden. Whom will the master rely on? Providence is our Master. We are the gardeners.

I am entirely yours. I serve you and you alone.

—The devotee

July 19

THE AXLE

The wheel turns having the axle as the basis. The axle is not only the basis it also keeps the movement of the wheel under control. Such is also the structure of Nature.

Motion is relative. A moving object requires an immovable basis to move on. The moving planets have the fixed space to move on. The perishing beings have the persisting consciousness as the axle or basis. Nature rests and moves on Consciousness.

In man Consciousness is the axle on which the body and mind move and evolve.

— *Vedānta*

July 20

PRUDENCE

A prudent man wants to get on smoothly with all. He avoids coming into conflict with any one. This is worldly wisdom otherwise called prudence.

Worldly views are many and apparently conflicting. To subscribe to all of them or to compromise with all of them amounts to hypocrisy. That kind of prudence is more a vice than virtue. Keep your views to yourself and be not anxious to please others. Self-restraint is prudence.

That man is prudent who lends his ears and restrains his tongue.

— Tiruvalluvar

July 21

MONEY

A man without means is a non-entity in society. So he is bound to earn it by honest means.

Very many people are slaves to money. Instead, they ought to make it their slave. No wealth should be acquired by foul means. There should be no thought of coveting the property of others. As money is earned honestly so it should be spent on good causes.

Money is an asset to earthly life. It procures facilities. But attachment to money is a hindrance to spiritual growth.

— Rāmakrishna

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July 22

THE INSIGNIFICANT ACT

Nature executes all acts, great and small, with equal importance. May man learn to regard every little work as the worship of the Almighty.

Doings such as eating, sleeping, resting and speaking are of no consequence to the common man. But the great ones perform them with sanctity. The trifling duties are discharged meticulously by them. They neither hurry nor drag on. Ill-execution is something unknown to them. Scavenging is as sacred to them as being absorbed in the Divine.

As I grow old I see greatness in every little happening in Nature.

— Vivekānanda

July 23

THE TRAITOR

An open enemy does not do so much harm as a traitor does. An enemy compels one to practise self-defence. That is an indirect help. Whereas a traitor damns one treacherously.

An external traitor can be detected or avoided. But there is an internal traitor on whom the unwary man always relies. The uncontrolled mind is the traitor. It is the direct cause of every fall and humiliation that a man meets with. But man takes a long time before he spots out the inner traitor. Converting the foe of mind into friend is a rare act.

To him who has not subdued the mind, his own mind acts as the traitor.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

July 24

CONCENTRATION

Converging the faculties of the mind to one point is concentration. It is obtained by constant practice.

Fibres are tender and powerless. But if they are twisted into a rope, they assume the power to tie an elephant. Undisciplined mind is like the raw fibre. Mind in concentration is like the rope. The sunbeams converge to a point through the lens and put forth the maximum light and heat. Likewise the concentrated mind evinces the maximum power of grasp.

The difference between man and man is in the power of concentration.

— *Vivekānanda*

July 25

THE REFORMER

The man who gives thought to the evils in society and to their reformation is superior to the one quite callous to them.

No society is completely free from evils. A reformer choosing to rectify them should not get frenzied. Excitement fizzles out energy. Calm and cool-headed endeavour brings out great results. Above all the reformer must look into his own defects and set them right. Self-reformation precedes social reformation.

Wanted reformers, not of others, but of themselves. Godhead is the salary.

— Rāmtirtha

July 26

THE BLISSFUL SHEATH

Among the five sheaths that the self puts on, the blissful sheath is the nearest one just as the underwear is in contact with the body.

Man identifies himself with the clothing that he puts on. The quality of the clothing makes him feel elated or dejected. Even so the mood in the internal organ called the sheath makes him happy or unhappy.

Man is essentially Bliss. While in ignorance he searches for it in the external world. Ultimately he realizes he is Bliss.

— *Vedānta*

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July 27

THE CONSTRUCTIVE MISSILE

Nature is normally constructive. Occasionally she becomes destructive. Earthquake, flood, fire and storm are her havocs. In spite of them man thrives.

Man is both constructive and destructive. He is constructive to himself and destructive to the enemy. There are a rare few who are enemies to none. Rama of epic fame tried his best to reform the wicked. His powerful missile always had a transforming effect on its victim. It reclaimed all except Ravana.

A pure mind is always a constructive missile. It has its balmy effect on all who come in contact with it.

— *Mahābhārata*

July 28

LAMP WITHOUT FLICKER

The wind of desire blows. The lamp of mind flickers. Its wavering from one idea to another is its flicker. It should be arrested.

The senses are the inlets for desire to steal in. They should all be shut out. In the recesses of the heart consciousness is shining. It is the Self. Mind should be made to merge in it. Then it gains in stamina and calmness.

'As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker'—this is the simile used for the disciplined mind of yogi practising concentration on the Self.

—Bhagavad Gita

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July 29

PAIRS OF OPPOSITES

Nature is constituted of forces and events which are opposed to one another, proving themselves favourable or unfavourable to man.

Heat, cold, wind and rain are forces pertaining to nature. Gain, loss, success, failure, praise and censure are events originating from man. Favourable developments among them are pleasing and the others displeasing.

Self-culture consists in not being elated at getting the agreeable and dejected at getting the disagreeable. Viewing both with equanimity is yoga.

— *Vedānta*

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July 30

LIVELIHOOD

The struggle for existence is common to all living beings. The lower the order of existence, the keener is the struggle for subsistence.

At the human level the search for food has its grades. The body-centered man lives to earn and eat. He has no other concern than procure his bread. The intellect-centered man eats to live for an ideal. Except at appointed times he gives no thought to food. The spiritual man thinks not of food. Providence provides him.

I sustain the devotee who is completely absorbed in Me.

— Bhagavad Gita

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July 31

FACING DEATH

Without a single exception all those who are born have also to face death. But are they prepared to do so?

The man who completely gives himself away to an ideal outgrows attachment to life. He has neither the time nor the inclination to think of himself. Utter self-denial amounts to self-annihilation. By outgrowing life, man outgrows death too. For life and death are interrelated. The best way to conquer death is to lose one's life for an ideal.

As man is not aware of the fall of a hair from his head, so the knower of the Self is not aware of the fall of the body in death.

— *Vedānta*

August 1

THE WICKED MIND

The dispositions of the mind colour the objects favourably or unfavourably.

Ravana of the epic fame is the personification of the lustful mind. The five senses of knowledge and the five senses of action constitute the ten heads of the indulgent mind. Appropriating all the pleasures of the world is the watchword of the demoniacal mind. When this indulgent mind attempts ravage on purity personified as Sita, the consequence would be disastrous to the aggressive mind.

O Lord, many things impossible have been made possible by your grace. Pray deign to rectify my wicked mind.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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FORTITUDE

Storms and tempests in life do not disturb the men of stamina. They face them with all calmness. They observe their own inner worth on such occasions.

Fortitude fosters life. Its absence mars it. Fortitude makes life a boon. Feebleness turns it into a curse. Auspiciousness comes from fortitude. It engenders love and union. It saves man from impediments and leads him on to plenitude.

The man of fortitude realizes that he is atman and not the body.

— Vedānta

August 3

THE THUNDERBOLT

As the thunderbolt is a natural phenomenon it can also be made a human phenomenon. Man can become strong like a thunderbolt by self preparation.

By self-restraint man acquires power. There is no end to self-control. In proportion to the control the mental power develops. Then it becomes a moral force. Ultimately it evolves into a spiritual dynamo. There is no power superior to it. As a spiritual thunderbolt man can serve society beneficially.

Among weapons I am the thunderbolt.

— Bhagavad Gita

August 4

SLEEP AND SAMADHI

There are a few common grounds between the known sleep and the unknown Samadhi. The unknown can be inferred with the aid of the known.

Sleep and Samadhi are both the process of going back to the Original State which is Bliss. The disappearance of the phenomenal world is common to both. The Jivatman's individuality shrinks in sleep and expands in Samadhi. The one is phenomenon and the other noumenon.

In sleep awareness is veiled in ignorance. In Samadhi Awareness is intensified in Illumination which is permanent.

— Vedānta

August 5

FRIEND OR FOE?

In a military camp the intruder is held for inquiry. If he is a friend the treatment is in one way, if a foe it is in another way. The same should be the case everywhere.

Man should be soft with a friend and stern with a foe. Submission to the latter leads to deterioration. Combating with him is part and parcel of life. With manliness the foe is to be kept at bay.

To him who has conquered his base self by the divine self, his own self is the friend; but to him who has not subdued the self, his own self acts as the foe.

— Bhagavad Gita

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August 6

EMPTY THE MIND

The hardest of all tasks is the act of emptying the mind. Those only who make the attempt know of this fact.

Mind is stuffed with thoughts and ideas. When one thought is eliminated another crops up. It is endless. Some thoughts are hard to pull out. Others are linked up with associate thoughts. Like weeds they go on sprouting endlessly. Still the goal is to remove them all.

If the mind be emptied the Divine enshrined therein is realized spontaneously.

— *Vedānta*

August 7

THE FALSE MASTER

The world abounds with masters. They are required. But their credentials require to be enquired into.

A person of sterling character and pristine purity alone is fit to be a master. Spirituality and impurity never go together. Secondly a master is one who is free from personal considerations. He embodies the Ideal. Thirdly his gift is prompted by the love of humanity. He delights in the welfare of the others.

Beware of the man who seeks to be a master. He alone is a master who is egoless and an instrument in the hands of Providence.

— Rāmakrishna

August 8

RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

Adjust yourself to the welfare of all. Let not your personal requirement be a hindrance to the others.

Cause friction nowhere. Rub not anybody the wrong way. Avoid contact with the undesirable elements. Cringe not before men in power. Flatter not the well placed ones. Be polite, pleasant and sufficiently reserved in your dealings with all.

He who hates no being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from the feeling of 'I and mine' and forbearing—his relationship is sound.

— Bhagavad Gita

August 9

THE HARVEST

He who wants to reap a rich harvest in life must make the necessary preparation for it. Man reaps what he sows.

The selection and the preparation of the soil is the first duty. The quality of the seed and the season of sowing come next. Watering and weeding are equally important. Making a rich harvest is a matter of course. Man's earthly career is akin to this.

The heart is the field. Self-discipline is the fencing. Exclusion of worldliness is the weeding. Ardent application is the tilling. Holy thought is the seed. Fervour is the crop. Divine ecstasy is the harvest.

— *Tirumūlar*

August 10

THE FIRM-IN-MIND

The majority in the world drift on without any set purpose in life. It is rare to come across people dedicated to one ideal.

The firm-in-mind are they who give themselves over to a great cause. Trials and tribulations do not disturb their decision. Failure if any is immaterial to them. Their joy consists in faithfully serving the cause. To them doggedness is in itself equal to an achievement.

The firm-in-mind hold on but to one decision. Many-branching and endless are the decisions of the infirm-in-mind.

— Bhagavad Gita

August 11

RENEWED LIFE

Fatalists say that a bad man has no redemption in his present life. His only hope is in his reincarnation. But the enlightened ones say that man can renew life any time at will. That is the privilege of the human birth.

The snake casts off the slough and thereby renews its skin. Man can change his mind and thereby renew his life. Purified thoughts and cleansed ideas emanate from a reborn mind. When the mind reforms itself life also changes for the better.

As easily as man sheds a bad dream he can shed his sensuous life.

— Tāyumānavar

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August 12

THE DOER OF GOOD

Men come under three categories. The wicked perpetrate evil under all circumstances. The mediocre alternate between good and evil. The refined ones do good alone unconditionally.

This world affords opportunity to all to work out their dispositions. It is possible here to make or mar one's career. This field of action ought to be turned to advantage. Fortunate are they who choose to do good here. Bad dispositions can be converted into good dispositions here.

The doer of good never comes to grief.

— Bhagavad Gita

August 13

EXALTED LIFE

The choice of making or marring life is with man. A wise man is he who chooses to live an exalted life.

An exalted life speaks for itself. The thoughts that propel life are all dignified, the sentiments are sublime, the feelings are all noble. The intellect is clarified. The doings are all purposeful and actuated by the spirit of service. A man of exalted life lives not exclusively for himself, but for the public good.

Lord, you have made my life exalted, my love endless and my bliss ineffable.

— Tāyumānavar

August 14

THE ULTRA PURIFIER

Nature is constantly purifying her elements such as the earth, water and air. She also purifies beings through evolution.

Nature functions as Jnana-Sakti or the power of knowledge. Beings are goaded to know more and yet more. It is therefore open to man to increase his knowledge. With its aid he grasps his divine possibilities. Ultimately he realizes he is the sinless and immortal Atman.

Verily there is no purifier in this world like knowledge. He that is perfected in yoga realizes it in his own heart in due time.

— Bhagavad Gita

August 15

THE SLAVE

Man does not realize that he is slave to his own base nature. An enquiry into it is therefore necessary.

The fish is caught in the hook it being slave to the tongue. The moth perishes in the fire being slave to the sense of sight. The deer is caught by the hunter it being misguided by hearing. The sense of smell entraps the beetle. The wild elephant is caught by the tame elephant utilizing the sense of touch. Now what is to become of man who is a slave to all the five senses?

The man who controls all the five senses becomes the immortal atman.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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August 16

FORTIFICATION

A fortified city is free from the danger of being attacked by the enemy. Man's mind has to be similarly fortified against the invisible enemies.

Lust, greed, anger and hatred are the enemies wrecking the career of man. They are capable of invasion at any time. When the mind falls into their hands man is ruined. It has to be therefore properly fortified. When the defence is strong the enemy beats a retreat.

Fortification constructed of self-control and universal love makes the mind impregnable to the foe.

— *Mahābhārata*

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August 17

THE SOCIETY OF SAINTS

The company of the holy is a rare gift. Fortunate is the aspirant who obtains it. He is bound to evolve in holiness.

Environment is a great factor in chiselling the career of man. A baby brought up by the wolves develops wolfish traits. A boy brought up by the wicked becomes himself a hooligan. The one reared by the good emerges a good character.

Fixation in the Divine is inevitable to the one placed in the society of saints.

— Tirumūlar

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August 18

THE WISH-FULFILLING TREE

Mythology speaks of kalpataru, the wish-fulfilling tree in heaven. Man gets whatever he desires sitting under this tree.

Providence is the wish-fulfilling tree. All beings are getting their requirements. Time taken for the fulfilment may vary. But it does come sooner or later. Otherwise life would be purposeless. There is difference between man and man in the act of asking for a thing. Ask for great and holy things, not for vulgar things.

Man's worth is known in the object he seeks for.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

August 19

HARD TO CONTROL

It is hard to control and tame a wild animal. It is harder to control the mind. Still it has to be done.

The nature of the mind can be changed through nurture. Practice is the means to this end. To wean the mind from its wonted ways and direct it on the ideal is practice. Mind becomes pacified when it is directed to the self. When sound sleep puts it at rest, why not the wakeful state also do the same?

No doubt, the mind is restless and hard to control; but by practice and non-attachment it can be controlled.

— Bhagavad Gita

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August 20

DEFEAT

Life oscillates between victory and defeat. It is defeat that adds value to victory. It further tones the mind.

He who is always victorious in his undertakings becomes shallow and conceited. Defeat makes him reflective and self-analytic. Very often defeat is a blessing in disguise, the utility of which is not immediately recognized. It is because of defeat many people have not ruined themselves.

Defeat is the touchstone on which the mental make up of a man is brought out.

— Mahābhārata

August 21

THE FICKLE-MINDED

As is the mind so is the man. When the mind is erratically changing the owner of that mind becomes undependable. To make the mind constant is the purpose of life.

The man of unsettled mind makes many experiments with life. He shifts from one line of action to another. He constantly changes profession. In the end he finds himself a bundle of negation. Steadiness builds life; unsteadiness pulls it down.

There is no wisdom in the fickle-minded; nor is there serene thought in him. To such a person there is no peace.

— Bhagavad Gita

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August 22

THE GREAT BOOK

Man is the replica of the world. The study of man therefore is equivalent to the study of the world. So man is a great book to be studied.

The plan of Nature is the same everywhere. In it the ever available material for investigation is man himself. Enquiry into him expands into an endless wisdom. When man is fully known nothing else remains to be known. He is therefore viewed as the lord of creation.

A reverent study of oneself ultimately ends as the study of the Infinite.

— *Vedānta*

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August 23

FIDELITY

Be devoted to the Ideal with all your heart, with all your might. Swerve not from it for any cause whatsoever.

A man rears up a pup. It grows in fidelity. Later on the master neglects the dog and even ill-treats it. Even then it does not deviate from its devotion to the master. Such should be the constancy of man towards his noble purpose in life.

Even if I happen to be a naughty child,
O Lord, is it meet for you to forsake me?
Do I have any refuge other than you?

— *Tāyumānavar*

August 24

EFFORT

The ant seems insignificant. But it is all effort all day long. Man ought to be like unto the ant in his efforts.

The cosmos knows no rest. It is constantly in motion. Because of its effort it retains its grandeur. Man can become great by his ceaseless efforts, but not by his frenzied activities. Steady application to duty is worship.

The latent potentialities in man become patent in tune with the constancy of effort.

— Tiruvalluvar

August 25

CO-OPERATION

As the limbs in the body co-operate among themselves man is obliged to hold himself a limb of society and discharge his duty.

The limbs in the body cannot isolate and function exclusively for themselves. What one limb does is for the general welfare of the whole body. Even so man cannot and should not segregate himself from the corporate life. His duty is to make himself a useful member of society.

A thief verily is he who enjoys the benefits given him by society but does not discharge his duty to it.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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August 26

WORSHIP

When appreciation takes a practical shape it is called worship. Man's worth is known by the object to which he directs his worship.

Many things in Nature compel man to be drawn to them. There are beautiful spots on earth that arrest his attention. He admires persons of sterling character. He is drawn to great ideals. These are all various forms of worship.

Worship of the grand and the sublime is the way of the enlightened man.

— *Mahābhārata*

August 27

THE SUPREME PURIFIER

Earth, water, fire and air are the elements come from God. And they are all great agents for purifying things and beings.

The Original Stuff is Divinity. It is the blessed privilege of man to link himself at any time with Divinity. While the elements purify his body Divinity makes him divine by Its contact. There is no abode superior to Divinity. It is therefore the Supreme Purifier. Man is to know and avail himself of It.

You are the supreme Abode, the Supreme Purifier of beings.

— Bhagavad Gita

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August 28

DISTRACTION

Attraction and distraction are the two forces of nature evident almost everywhere. The former is positive and the latter semi-negative.

But for distraction man is able to turn out more work than he usually does. Distraction is both subjective and objective. When the mind wanders on unwanted things while at work, it is subjective distraction. When the things external draw the attention, it is objective distraction. Both are undesirable.

Man gets fixed in yoga when his mind is not disturbed by distraction of any kind.

— Vedānta

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August 29

PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness is a virtue characteristic of the prudent man. Exemplary life is a series of preparedness.

Preparedness is the opposite of slothfulness. What is to be done today should not be postponed for tomorrow. Time rolls on ceaselessly. A moment wasted is therefore a permanent loss. Timely execution of the imperative duty is right living. It also amounts to preparedness.

A man of regulated living is ever prepared for any contingency.

— *Mahābhārata*

August 30

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Man is so constituted that he is able to study the external world, but not himself. He has to reconstitute himself to study the self. Self-knowledge is superior to world-knowledge.

The body and mind are the perishing aspects in man. Sheathed in them is the immortal self. It is the Pure Consciousness. Control of the senses and introspection are necessary to intuit the Self.

When the individualized self is known, knowledge of the Cosmic Self dawns of its own accord.

— *Tāyumānavar*

August 31

VALUE

What is held precious by one may be slighted as paltry by another. In valuing things no two persons are quite in harmony.

One holds money all in all and is out to acquire it. Another views pleasure as the prize of life and hankers for it. Yet another seeks erudition as very valuable. Refinement is considered by a rare individual as the goal in life. Value varies in tune with the attainments of man.

Where your treasure is there is your heart.

— Jesus Christ

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September 1

SPIRITUAL ANGUISH

Worldly woes wear away the physique. Whereas the pining of the mind for the grace of God enriches it.

It is not given to all to develop spiritual anguish. Experienced ones see into the emptiness of earthly life. An awakening takes place in them. They hanker after the persisting reality. They know of no rest until the Imperishable is realized.

Spiritual anguish is the harbinger of spiritual enlightenment.

— *Rāmakrishna*

September 2

GOD

Belief in God is a powerful force. But the concept of God is causing confusion and dissension among the religionists. It requires to be clarified.

The self-interested theologions have created a jealous personal God bent on protecting his adherents and damning the votaries of the rival gods. The whole of this fabric is an arrant fiction. The impersonal cosmic Intelligence governs the universe. It is the only Reality common to all. There is no objection to labelling It as God.

Infinite-Existence-Knowledge-Bliss is the Basic Reality.

— *Vedānta*

September 3

STEADFASTNESS

The man with no definite purpose in life and no particular mode of life vacillates and drifts. He is merely a figure-head.

Many places may be visited, but man must learn to live steadily in one place. Vocations are many. Man must choose for himself the vocation best suited to him. Then there must be an unflinching application to it. Adherence to one sound method of execution is all important.

Steadfastness is a prerequisite for the achievement of great things.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

September 4

THE GOLDEN AGE

It is possible for man to be in the golden age or the iron age according to his choice. It all depends upon his disposition.

He who is of a clean frame of mind can be in the golden age here and now itself. Relinquishment of selfishness is its first condition. Abandoning of jealousy, hatred and calumny come next. Love of all beings is the golden age.

Will I not be instantly placed in the realm of the Divine if I switch myself over to It?

— Tāyumānavar

September 5

RENUNCIATION

Renunciation may be positively defined. It is the act of selecting the thing, the occupation and the environment that one wants. This process is going on eternally in the world.

A man renounces a thing for which there is no more need. A knowing man renounces the lower order of living and chooses to live in the higher order of existence. A wise man eschews the company of the worldly and decides to live alone or with them of the same temperament. This is renunciation.

Not by karma, not by progeny, not by wealth but by renunciation alone is Immortality obtained.

— *Vedānta*

September 6

SINCERITY

Among virtues sincerity is the simplest. It moulds the personality most. It leads the human into the divine.

A man sincere to his ideal does not seek recognition. In obscurity he is all earnestness and labour. Ostentation is absent in him. Love of show is the opposite of sincerity. Nothing can tempt and divert the sincere man. Idleness is something unknown to him. Sincerity is its own reward. Satisfaction is its by-product.

The man who is sincere to the core is bound to make a mark in life.

— Tiruvalluvar

September 7

DEVOTION

Extreme love of the Lord of the universe is devotion. It is spontaneous and not motivated by any personal consideration.

Expectation of a reward and the practice of devotion do not co-exist. Devotion expresses itself in the form of service. No work done for the Lord is felt hard or tiresome. Joy increases along with the exertion for the glory of the Creator. As devotion waxes selfishness wanes. Devotion is its own reward.

The man endowed with devotion gives his everything to the Lord. He asks for nothing from the Maker.

— Tāyumānavar

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September 8

RIGHT LIVING

Living is common to all beings. Right living is given to only a few. It is right living that becomes highly fruitful.

Indulgent living is wrong. Restrained living is right. Thought of the welfare of the others must dominate over the thought of self-interest. Right living causes the least hindrance to the others and the maximum good to all.

Make your life ever useful to the others and an instrument to eliminate misery in them.

— *Buddha*

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September 9

THE DYEING TUB

Nature is colourful. Different expressions are possible because of the variety in colour. Man's taste is known by his choice of colour.

A dyeing shop had a solitary tub. People brought cloths to be dyed in various colours. The dyer dipped them all in the same tub and brought out all the required hues. A customer left the choice of colour with the dyer. He in turn left the cloth white—a symbol of purity.

The solitary dyeing tub and the dyer is the mind. The various hues are its dispositions. The mind free from likes and dislikes is divine, indeed.

— Rāmakrishna

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September 10

THE GLORY

There is glory permeating the whole of the universe. May my mind also be saturated with it.

There is no such thing called the trifle. Probe into the macrocosm or the microcosm. Grandeur alone is in evidence everywhere. As the study deepens the revelation of the glory increases. It sends the student into rapture. Paying obeisance to it becomes automatic.

If I only purify my mind, all the glory existent in the universe I will be able to realize within me.

— Tāyumānavar

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September 11

COMPANY

Gregarious creature that man is, he is in need of company. So let him choose the company congenial to his growth.

Solitude is sought as a training ground. It is not a lifelong aim. Then man lives in company. Birds of the same feather flock together, is the proverb. A man's make up is known by the sort of company that he seeks. It is the group life that aids the growth of man.

Seek the company of the good and the wise. It protects you and promotes your spiritual career.

— Rāmakrishna

September 12

FREEDOM III

The freedom that man hankers after cannot be had in the phenomenal universe, it being the cause of his bondage.

Man wants to be free from decay, disease and death. But body-bound that he is, he cannot escape from these inevitable modifications. Man is in fact Atman enshrined in body. When he gains self-knowledge he frees himself from these limitations, pertaining to body.

Because of his identification with body the immortal man thinks of himself as the mortal. Self-knowledge gives him freedom—Mukti.

— Vedānta

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September 13

TRANQUIL IN TURMOIL

Nature is a bundle of contradictions. She does not provide beings with all that they seek.

Man is in search of many things. But he does not get all that he wants. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction play hide-and-seek with him. The latter disturbs him more. The remedy is subjective. Man must practise calmness when there are causes for concern.

Struggle hard to achieve your aim. There is no other go. But be balanced. Be tranquil knowing that you are placed in turmoil.

— *Mahābhārata*

September 14

PERSONALITY

The majority in the world are mere figureheads. Like waves in the ocean they simply appear and disappear. But a personality leaves his mark.

The build of personality is the purpose of yoga. Self-preparation and self-dedication are the two ways to achieve it. Spiritual discipline constitutes self-preparation. Serving the fellow-beings is self-dedication. Personality becomes great when these two aspects in life are intensified.

As the seed fulfils itself into a tree, the individual self fulfils itself into a fully evolved personality.

— Vedānta

September 15

UTILITY

Nothing in Creation goes to waste. Everything has its utility. Man is bound to enquire into his utility.

Utility varies with enlightenment. Things considered useless are made the best use of by the knowing people. Among the beings in the world man occupies a unique position. He can be utilized for all and sundry. The human force is to be made the best use of.

It is possible for man alone to transform himself from the human into the divine. There is no utility greater than that.

— *Tāyumānavar*

September 16

CHILD-LIKE SIMPLICITY

As man grows he develops angularities deviating from his original simplicity. He is obliged to redress them in order to become perfect.

Mind gets complicated and blurred when it is given to calculation and guile. Its directness is lost thereby. The spiritually evolving man has to rid the mind of all acquired dispositions. Its native simplicity is the real kingdom of heaven. It has to be regained.

Divinity manifests in man in direct proportion to the assumption of the simplicity of the child.

— *Vedānta*

September 17

MEDITATION

Fish is in its element in water. Man is in his element when he shuts out the senses and muses upon the self.

Meditation is spontaneous to the one pure in mind. He becomes an introvert and delights in the self. This state is natural to him. He renews his personality by regular meditation in the morning and evening. He nourishes himself in blessedness.

Divinity shines best in the heart of the yogi given to deep meditation.

— *Tāyumānavar*

September 18

THE SALT DOLL

A doll is viewed as a living being by the baby. Similarly man is merely a doll having a reflected Consciousness. His source is the Original Consciousness.

A salt doll never survives a sea-bath. Seemingly it is lost. But its substance regains its original status. Jeevatman or the individual self is nothing but Paramatman reflected in the mind. When mind is absolved the individual self merges in the Universal Self. The gain is superb.

The salt doll dissolves its seeming individuality. But it gains in its salty vastness. Man merging in Brahman becomes Brahman.

— Vedānta

September 19

LUXURY

Man is lured by luxury. He is not attracted by austerity. The right course requires to be studied.

Living a life of ease and feasting the senses to satiation is luxury. It drowns the man. Fasting to the point of emaciation is austerity defeating its own purpose. Controlling oneself to moderation eating well and working hard are the codes to be followed for a sane living.

Inordinate luxury in an individual or group is the forerunner of the downfall of that individual or group.

— *Mahābhārata*

September 20

WAKEFULNESS

There is difference between man and man in the intensity of wakefulness. The majority may be said to be sleeping life long.

To be immersed in ignorance is as dormant as being in sleep. Being under the sway of the senses is also as defective as being in ignorance. Man has passed through many births in this manner. He really wakes up when he realizes he is Atman.

Becoming aware of one's spiritual verity is the real wakefulness. It enriches life in every respect.

— *Vedānta*

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September 21

AWAKENING

In time man gets awakened to the higher possibilities in life. Then he applies himself to the achievement of the ideal with added effort.

Man wakes up to a new life when he understands his relationship with the Divinity enshrined in his heart. Then his work becomes simple. All that he has to do is to remove the obstacles in the form of egoism and conceit. The Higher Being kindles him then to a greater purpose.

Lord, make me realize your unchanging Holy Presence in my heart.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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September 22

THE SKELETON

The skeleton alone remains long after death. All the other ingredients in man dissolve quick with time.

Almost all have seen the human skeleton. If it were to tell its autobiography it would impress effectively on man's mind. Life on earth is evanescent. The born one may die at any moment. Remembrance of this fact would tone down many an impetuosity in life. A balanced outlook would be the result.

Man is the immortal Atman temporarily enshrined in the mortal frame.

— *Vedānta*

September 23

PURITY

Pure water can be mixed with pure water without compunction. The pure in heart asserts its godhood without hesitation. Purity is self-evident.

As the mind becomes pure it gains in clarity. The pure mind cognizes truth. Its executive power increases. As the flower puts forth fragrance the pure mind blossoms in bliss and sweetness.

Purity produces brilliance
Purity is not to the pervert
Purity when earnestly sought, that
Purity becomes the property.

— *Tirumūlar*

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September 24

THE GREATEST BOOK

The availability of great books is as advantageous as the contact with the authors thereof. The books are, further, always at the disposal of the reader.

Each religionist claims his sacred book alone to be the greatest. Vedanta says the Cosmos is the Greatest Book. It has emanated from the Cosmic Intelligence. It is imperishable and unalterable. It reveals the Truth. Therefore read the book called Nature to know the Truth.

The universe, the four Vedas and the Creator Brahma are all one and the same.

— Vedānta

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September 25

THE TRIPLE IMPEDIMENT

What impedes the growth of man in excellence has to be noted and eliminated. This act is as important as weeding out the wild plants.

Fear eats into one's personality. One becomes incapable of manly action when one is frightened. Anger poisons one's system. The man given to anger surrenders his discrimination. Envy gnaws away the potentialities of a person. By envying the others a man degrades himself.

Fear, anger and envy are the triple impediment that never allows man rise to eminence.

— Rāmakrishna

September 26

PERFECTION

The doings of a man reveal his attainments. He should aim at perfection in all the aspects of life.

Nature reveals perfection at all levels. Man ought to make an intelligent study of this glory in her. By taking note of it he rouses himself up to an improved way of living. By a constant striving towards perfection he enriches his career. His relationship with the other beings becomes sound.

An imperfect god is man. A perfect man is God. Perfection is the goal of life on earth.

— *Vedānta*

September 27

THE TRANCE SLUMBER

Sleep is one state and wakefulness another. The one negates the other. Yoga brings in harmony between the two.

While in wakefulness mind ought to be free from mentation as in sleep. Thereby awareness gets intensified. That intense state persists in sleep also. When wakefulness and sleep are equated it is *yoga nidra* or trance slumber. Work and rest go side by side in that state of blessedness.

Of what use are ordinary sleep and wakefulness? I shall have attained enlightenment when my sleep merges into wakefulness.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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September 28

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Everything in Nature had its past; everything has its future. Man has to bear this in mind in his onward march.

Hating the past amounts to foiling the future. To be gloating over the past is the way of the slovenly. To drag the past and the future into the living present is the way of the industrious and the prosperous. To be beyond time is the way of the wise. Unmindful of time he does the right thing.

The past is the basis, the future is the goal and the present is the opportunity to a hero.

— Vedānta

September 29

MOUTHPIECE

The modern mike is the mouthpiece of speeches good and bad. But man should not become the mouthpiece of meaningless ideas. What he voices must always be beneficial to people.

Saints and sages take care to see that they are no mouthpiece of anything inauspicious. Either they speak constructive ideas or maintain silence.

When man surrenders his individuality he becomes the mouthpiece of Divinity. What he utters is the voice of the Divine.

— *Vedānta*

September 30

SELF-SURRENDER

Self-surrender is the holiest of all acts. It is like the prodigal son returning to the parents. It is like anarchy giving place to benevolent monarchy.

A man of mature understanding realizes that the Cosmic Intelligence governs the universe with precision. Its design is inexorable. Therefore he subordinates his will to the Cosmic Will. His doings then coalesce with the cosmic plan. This infallible act is called self-surrender.

Renounce all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sins.

— Bhagavad Gita

October 1

THE UNIVERSAL QUEST

Beings seem as if goaded by divergent motives. Some are aggressive while the others are passive. Still their quest is the same.

All beings abhor death and cling fast to life. Seeking to exist is their universal quest. Secondly all beings try to know more and yet more in their respective spheres. Thirdly misery is shunned by all beings. It is in quest of happiness they move about. No price is great that is paid for happiness.

The search for existence-knowledge-bliss is common to all beings. Their quest is universal.

— *Vedānta*

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October 2

SANCTUARY

A sanctuary requires to be recognized as such. Then it requires to be maintained with devotion.

What is sanctuary to one need not necessarily be so to another. Very often a fanatic gloats in defiling the sacred place of an alien. But the human body is the universally accepted sanctuary. It is divinely ordained so. Man is obliged to view his body as the temple of the Maker. The alien and the infidel also are to be treated with the due regard.

I once thought the body was a dirty burden. I then found the Divine enshrined in it. Now knowing it as a sanctuary I uphold it.

— *Tirumūlar*

October 3

THE REQUISITE

A project without the requisite is not possible to carry out. Each scheme has its own requisites. Man's life is no exception to it.

Barring man all creatures are so constituted that they are self-sufficient to carry on their career. Man alone is in need of housing, clothing and a variety of instruments suited to the callings. His objective requisites are incalculable. But for self-perfection the requisites are all subjective.

A healthy body, sound mind, keen intellect and an ardent desire for enlightenment are the requisites for self-perfection.

— Vedānta

October 4

THE EYE

Lord, you shine as the eye in me. May I have the eye to see you as the eye of the universe.

The eye is the chief organ of knowledge. The inner stuff reveals itself through the eye. Nature is not blind, it is eyed. Its precise functioning as time, space and causation attests to its being endowed with the eye of knowledge. Inner eye is more important to man than the physical eye.

The cultured alone are called the eyed ones. The others merely own two apertures resembling sores.

— Tiruvalluvar

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October 5

REGENERATE HEART

Infusing the heart with noble ideas is far superior to feeding the body with nourishing food, though both are essential.

The old life of petty outlook must give place to the new one of gentleness, purity and patience. Joy and confidence should take the place of regret and defeatism. Enlightenment should relegate ignorance. The life of buoyancy should reign over despondency.

The one poised in spirituality regenerates his heart day after day until perfection is reached.

— *Vedānta*

October 6

CALMNESS

Disturbed state of mind dissipates away the energy. Calmness on the other hand gathers it up. Calmness under all circumstances characterizes the seasoned man.

A gentle gust causes commotion in twigs, reeds and creepers. But the most violent gale does not disturb the trunk of a tall tree. Likewise the trained up mind maintains its calmness in trials and tribulations.

There is no ruffle when the pitcher is filled to the brim. So is the knowing mind.

— A Proverb

October 7

MEDICINE

Medicine is one of the wonders of Nature. If there are diseases there are also remedial measures. Medicine ought to be wisely availed of.

Not only man, but beasts and birds also sensibly avail themselves of medicinal herbs. In this respect man has a lesson to learn from the other creatures. Man often uses the medicine and courts illness simultaneously. The others avoid illness instinctively.

Self-knowledge is the most efficacious medicine. It permanently cures man of the disease called birth and death.

— *Vedānta*

October 8

THE PATH OF WORK

A number of men are seen in sound sleep. Thereby their attainments remain unknown. They wake up and engage themselves in their respective fields. Their talents then become evident.

Work is a means for self-expression. Earning the livelihood should be subordinated and subscribed to evolving the personality. Any calling is as good as any other provided it draws out the hidden possibilities. Work is an opportunity. It is not an irksome imposition.

Man carves his character by discharging his duty as an act of worship.

— *Mahābhārata*

October 9

THE BABE

Babes are spontaneously loved by all. They are themselves the embodiments of love. This is a rare phenomenon.

It is egoism that veils the divinity in man. The babe is one that has not yet developed egoism. It makes no difference between the kith and the stranger. Its mind is not yet tainted with likes and dislikes. Sex difference is not known to it. Purity marks it for its own. Therefore the babe commands the love of all.

Man has to outgrow egoism and become the enlightened babe of Divinity.

— *Vedānta*

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October 10

UNIVERSAL LOVE

Love is a divine trait in beings. No creature is alien to it. No creature is proof against love. The practiser of love fulfils life.

Loving a group, being indifferent to another and hating a third group is the norm with all beings. But a rare few eschew hatred and embrace love. All creatures are sacred to them. They literally adore the entire Creation. They are the salt of the earth.

Goutama Buddha was established in universal love. He extended his love and mercy to all the beings in the world.

— Buddha's Life

October 11

SOUND SLEEP

Sound sleep is a divine gift which man cannot afford to give up for the sake of anything else in the world.

Sound sleep is not given to the worldly minded. Careworn, they wake up now and then. But the healthy ones in mind plunge in sound sleep the moment they go to bed. Sound sleep bestows all benefits. The body is toned and the mind refreshed. Man renews himself in dreamless sleep.

All beings are unknowingly in their original state in sound sleep.

— *Vedānta*

October 12

PROBLEMS

The way of the worldly man is to get more and more entangled in it. Correspondingly his problems in life increase.

A child has no problem in life to solve. The reason for it is very simple. The child accepts life as it is. It neither seeks nor avoids anything. The man who learns to take up that position knows the scheme of life. He does not complicate it. He goes through it just as he ought to.

The knower of truth is free from all problems in life. So he is able to solve the problems of the others.

— *Mahābhārata*

October 13

THE ZERO

The Zero seems valueless. But it is more valuable than anything else in the universe. This is the paradox.

The Zero is nothing; it is valueless. But when it is annexed to a number it increases the value of that number. To the extent Zeros are placed the value of the number increases. The Zero and the infinitude are the same. The space is void; it is a Zero. Because it is a Zero it contains countless cosmic bodies.

The saint makes himself a zero. Because he has become a zero he reigns in the hearts of all who contact him.

— Vedānta

October 14

ASPIRATION

What else is life if it is not an incessant aspiration to improve upon itself?

If the growth of a creeper be magnified a million times it may be found to be steadily growing tall. And that is aspiration. Beings ought to improve their lot. Man ought to make all round progress. The urge to expand is aspiration.

The one wakeful to the uncertainty of the bodily life aspires to be fixed in the eternal Cosmic Consciousness.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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October 15

THE ECHO

The echo is a phenomenon both internal and external. The internal and subjective aspect of it is more consequential than the external and objective.

A young man well equipped for a happy life says, " How sweet life is ! " His heart echoes that statement. Another man faced with hardship says, "Is this life worth living?" His heart echoes that statement. Every heart echoes the experience good or bad.

The Self within is actionless. In its presence mind gets energized. As is the mind so is the life of man. Mind re-echoes the experiences in life.

— *Vedānta*

October 16

IN AND OUT

Divinity is both in and out. May I feel its presence in my heart. May I be ever devoted to it.

Those who are upright at heart see uprightness outside. The crooked at heart see crookedness outside. Our sole duty is to set right our heart. When we become sound in mind and body the world would present its true spectacle to us, its soundness. What we are within, that we see without as well.

To the enlightened the within and the without, all present sanctity and salubrity.

— *Tāyumānavar*

October 17

THE MASTER

Very many hasten to become masters before they attain competence to that responsible position. Whereas the real masters feel embarrassed to be called so.

The master is virtually a model student life long. While he occupies a venerable post he does not become self-conscious about it. He voluntarily comes down to the level of the taught in order to guide him up. There are also the traits of the parents in the true master.

He who is an exemplary character, who is an embodiment of what he teaches, who is all compassion to the taught, is the master.

— Vedānta

October 18

THE SINNER

It is meaningless to condemn a man as an irredeemable sinner. In several rebirths he pays dearly for his delinquency and then reforms himself.

Eternal damnation is not the plan of Providence. After experimenting with life in evil ways man gets enlightened into the right path. In the process of evolution a sinner also has his own way of coming up. He only delays his onward march.

Every saint had a PAST. Every sinner has a FUTURE.

— Tāyumānavar

October 19

THE BIRTH-PANG

Progeny is not possible without birth-pang. The creation of anything useful involves pain and perseverance. Nothing great is achieved without sacrifice.

A man of means knows how much strain he underwent to acquire his first thousand rupees. A scholar knows the intellectual toil to which he subjected himself all along. An institution builder knows the ordeals he passed through in his venture. Man almost dies in order to achieve something great.

Spiritual rebirth is the greatest of all achievements. It alone is attended with pleasure from the beginning to the end while bhoga begins as pleasure and ends as pain.

— *Vedānta*

October 20

THE ONSLAUGHTS ON LIFE

Nature is not always propitious to man. She is periodically stern and exacting.

Life is not always smooth and pleasant. Stagnation sets in sometimes. It is frequently beset with loss and defeat. Disease plays havoc in its own way. Enemies are out to oppress. In the face of all these difficulties man is obliged to make progress.

Turning misfortune and adversity to advantage is a science of life known only to the enlightened few.

— *Mahābhārata*

October 21

THE DISCIPLE – II

It is imperative on man to pass through the period of discipleship. It builds the personality and leads him to great possibilities.

The disciple comes under three grades— the dullard, the mediocre and the bright. The dullard receives discipline and retains fragments of it. The mediocre maintains the major part of it. The bright builds on it and prospers. He promotes what is beneficial to man.

He who surrenders himself completely to the master, who serves him earnestly and learns by observing and questioning, is the disciple.

— *Vedānta*

October 22

THE GREAT PROTECTION

Providence is the great protection. In the midst of constant destruction in Nature, beings are still being protected by Providence.

Clean living is the great protection. A man of clean life does not hide anything. Since he does not hurt anybody he does not fear anybody. His conduct is ever open to observation. Because he does not deceive anybody, he is not therefore deceived by anybody.

Lord, if I have your protection then what can hurt me? If I do not have your protection what else can protect me?

— Tāyumānavar

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October 23

THE VEHICLE

Modern man has made the greatest stride in the contrivance and use of vehicles. He has thereby conquered space.

Vehicles are there both for the conveyance of things and of thoughts. The former is not so purposeful as the latter. Language is a great vehicle to bring people together. The human structure is about the best vehicle found in Nature. Immense is the use to which it is put. It is capable of transforming the human into the divine. It is the best vehicle for the revelation of Atman.

The human body is the greatest vehicle for the manifestation of Divinity.

— *Vedānta*

October 24

CONSOLATION

Man occasionally feels frustrated. Things that seem bright suddenly become gloomy. Life on earth is not always sweet. Sometimes bitter pills have to be swallowed.

This world also has a negative side to present to man. His friends quit the world one after another. Some others betray him. Prosperity changes into adversity. Success gives place to failure. While in this plight consolation is possible only to the knowing few.

While the body is rapidly perishing my only consolation is in the Persisting Reality enshrined in the heart.

— Tāyumānavar

October 25

THE RENEWED LIFE

Man is never too late to mend his ways. The moment he improves upon his attitude he becomes a changed man. This privilege belongs to man and to none else.

When a mansion is to be raised on a spot the existing old house has to be razed to the ground. A disposition may be viewed as a mental edifice. It can be altered according to choice. Peevishness, excitement and envy constitute the old man. When changed over to calmness, cheerfulness and admiration of the eminent, the man turns a new and progressive chapter in life.

Man renews himself every time he links himself with the Divine residing in his heart.

— Vedānta

October 26

WEIGHING THE ANCHOR

Everything has its condition. When the condition is fulfilled the desired result is bound to come.

The fully loaded barge was kept anchored waiting for the change of tide. In the pitch dark night the flow tide started. Rowing up the river was easy. Sails were spread the wind proving favourable. But at dawn it was found the barge had not moved an inch! They had forgotten to weigh the anchor.

The anchor of attachment to the worldly life must be weighed if one wants to make progress in spirituality.

— *Rāmakrishna*

October 27

BEATITUDE

Heat originates from the sun. Beatitude originates from Divinity. It increases as one intensifies one's identity with Divinity.

Enjoyment has its limit. It gets satiated. Its reaction is misery. Happiness is not constant. It ends as sorrow. The thought of the bygone happiness brings in melancholy. Whereas the way of beatitude is unique. The question of gain and loss does not arise in it. It is divine in nature and ever on the increase.

Earthly joy is evanescent. Beatitude blossoms more and yet more.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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October 28

SERENITY

Excitement in man must give place to serenity. The one is destructive and the other constructive.

When the brute instinct is dominating in man it does not allow him to be calm. Aversion to excitement is the first sign of man getting reformed. Sublimity should be deliberately instilled. Following in its wake serenity would also set in.

When the mind is made vast and deep as the ocean the little ruffles in it get resolved. Then serenity prevails.

— *Vedānta*

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October 29

THE TEST

Tribulations and obstacles are the weapons to test man's worth and his adherence to a cause.

Easy path, attractive status, toilless reward, nominal adherence and unending happiness attract crowds. But when the test becomes severe they fall out entirely. The aspiring man is put to test. According to his worth he is awarded. The test is the criterion.

In the pursuit of the Ideal sometimes man's very life is at stake. Even then he should not forsake the Ideal. That is the test of his devotion to the Ideal.

— *Mahābhārata*

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October 30

MANLINESS

Strength in man misused becomes knavery. When it is used for good causes it is manliness. The duty of man is to manifest manliness.

The weak-hearted man is good for nothing. He is soft like the puffed rice soaked in milk. He is unable to achieve anything in life. But the strong and virile man is heroic. He is capable of achieving anything in life. Manliness is born of upright living.

Manliness precedes godliness. He who evinces manliness is soon bound to grow in godliness.

— *Vedānta*

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October 31

THE TOUCHSTONE

Situations serve as touchstone. Man's worth is revealed by the manner in which he reacts to the situations favourable and unfavourable.

This world is a training ground to man. Good and evil alternate in it. He has to learn lesson from both. If he welcomes the one and recoils from the other he betrays small calibre. When he remains unaffected by either he proves his superior stuff.

Nature with its fluctuations serves as a touchstone putting man to test. If he proves his superior stamina under all eventualities he has trained himself well.

— *Mahābhārata*

November 1

THE PRICE

The due price has to be paid in order to obtain an object. If man aspires to become great, he has to undergo the required self-preparation.

When narrow selfishness is sacrificed praiseworthy selflessness takes its place. When pettiness is put aside magnanimity emerges. When 'I and mine' are renounced the all-inclusive universalism reigns supreme. The price paid is paltry. What is procured is priceless.

Man hugs individuality. But if he surrenders it Divinity dawns in him.

— *Vedānta*

November 2

MOTHER NATURE

Nature is not dead mechanism. She is vibrant with life. She is more than that. She begets and fosters life at all levels.

Saints and sages have a holy relationship with Nature. They look upon her with reverence. Their faith in her is unswerving. In response to their trust and submission Mother Nature provides her dependent and divine children with their needed physical, ethical and spiritual succour.

Sri Ramakrishna is the latest spiritual child of Mother Nature benignly brought up by her. This relationship is open to all.

— Rāmakrishna's biography

November 3

PILGRIMAGE

The river is flowing back to the ocean, its starting place. Beings are unconsciously heading towards Godhead their starting place.

Evolution is the plan by which beings pull up. They pass through countless births and deaths before they reach the human level. Then they are to strive to ascend to the spiritual zone. The whole process is a prolonged pilgrimage. There is no rest till the goal is reached.

Man terminates his pilgrimage when he realizes he is Atman.

— *Vedānta*

November 4

THE LABEL

A thing is denoted with label. It is therefore the guiding principle. Sometimes a label misguides man. A thing is not what it is labelled to be.

Both in business and in profession care should be taken to see that the label and what it indicates tally in all respects. Labelling is easy. Bringing reputation and confidence in it is the main purpose. Man is expected to be true to his profession.

Man labelling himself as the Hindu, Christian or Muslim is not the chief thing. His living an exalted life is all in all.

— *Rāmakrishna*

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November 5

CONSCIENCE

Lord, you are residing as Conscience in the core of my heart. How foolish I am in seeking you elsewhere !

God is the Life of life. He is enthroned as Conscience in all. Still He beggars description. He cannot be negated either. Ceaselessly he fulfils himself. Ego enshrouds him. When ego is eliminated Conscience speaks. Saints listen to him.

Conscience cannot be negated. It is beyond thought and forgetfulness. It neither goes nor comes. When shall I be united with it?

— *Tāyumānavar*

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November 6

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE VESSEL

The mythology speaks of a vessel which is always full of wholesome food. It does not get exhausted however much things may be distributed from it.

Nature may be allegorically spoken of as the inexhaustible vessel. She is constantly doling out to the beings and nourishing them. Still her supply is perennial. It is left to man to tap at her and get all his wants. There is no such thing as deficit in her.

The willing mind is the inexhaustible vessel that is ever giving away and never denying.

— *Mahābhārata*

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November 7

SECTARIANISM

Sects have their merits and demerits. The demerits are very often exaggerated. The utility of sects deserves to be carefully studied.

The evil in sectarianism is that it tries to divide societies on trifling differences. But it is not an insurmountable defect. Its utility is that it brings people together. It protects the novice. It educates the community. It aids the stranded and the less fortunate ones. Above all it preserves and propagates the ideal of the race. What family is for the physical growth, sectarianism is for the moral and spiritual growth.

It is good to be born in a church (sect) but bad to die in it.

— *Vivekānanda*

November 8

BLESSEDNESS

It is blessedness when one feels complete and perfect in oneself and needs no extraneous aid of any kind.

All beings are in want. They feel they are lacking in one thing or another. All struggles and attempts are at removing the want. As one want is fulfilled another want crops up. It is blessedness when one rises above all wants and defects.

Blessedness is the Original State of man. He gets back into it as quickly as he gets enlightenment.

— *Vedānta*

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November 9

DRONE

Wretched is the man who is a drone in society, making no contribution of his but depending entirely on others.

Society is so constituted that one cannot live exclusively for oneself. Amenities are already provided by others before one is born into the world. In return one should contribute one's best for the public weal. Mutual help is the law of life on earth.

Lord, may my contribution be the maximum and may my claim be the minimum.

— Tāyumānavar

November 10

VALUING THE DIAMOND

The knowing man alone is capable of valuing things properly. The swinish one cannot be expected to admire the pearl. As man understands so he interprets.

A vegetable vendor guessed that a diamond could be bargained in exchange for two baskets of brinjals. A cloth merchant viewed that diamond as worth a bale of cloths. Next a diamond merchant valued it at two lakhs of rupees.

Similarly a labourer utilizes the human life merely for its own sustenance. A scholar makes use of it for erudition. The wise man metamorphoses the human life into the divine.

— *Rāmakrishna*

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November 11

YAJNA II —THE MILCH COW

Grabbing is not the goal of the human life. Man pròspers by gifting. The act of gifting is Yajna.

Kamadhenu is the mythological milch cow of desires. He who owns this cow is never in want. The more he gives away the more this animal provides him for further gift. Life becomes prosperous and beneficial that way.

The bounteous mind is the real milch cow of desires. It is by gifting that the mind expands. And this is the higher law of life.

— Bhagavad Gita

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November 12

THE SEED

The seed is the unmanifest state of life. The tree, the flower and the fruits are all contained in it.

As is the seed so is the tree. This truth applies to life at all levels.

In man the mind is the seed. The minds of no two men are alike. There are as many minds as there are men. The blessing in man is that he can change the quality of his mind at any time. It is the good mind that evolves as a good career.

O Lord, you are the seed of everything in the universe. May I derive all sanctity from you.

— *Tāyumānavar*

November 13

KRISHNA'S FLUTE

The flute of Krishna has an eternal message. It is constantly vibrant. It is the Sound Reality.

A reed is a trifling substance. If trampled it breaks and becomes useless. Krishna's flute is made of the reed. A few holes pierced into it give it its speciality. The melody that Krishna tunes in it draws the entire creation in unison to his presence. Man dedicated to Divinity becomes Krishna's flute, but if turned to wordliness, he becomes a broken reed.

The souls that prepare themselves in purity are able to hear Krishna's flute and they turn Godward.

— Bhāgavata

November 14

PRACTICE Vs PRECEPT

Contact with an exemplary character is a rare gift. It is a boon if it happens even once in one's life time.

Masters are few and far between. Their advent may be once in a thousand years. The world is fortunate to that extent. The life they lead is their lasting contribution to the world. What they preach is only a fraction of their being. Inspiration is to be drawn from their exalted career.

An ounce of practice is better than tons of tall talks.

— *Vivekānanda*

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November 15

DREAM

There is none who does not experience dream. Still this phenomenon remains unnoticed by the majority. Whereas it has a great lesson to teach.

In dream mind enjoys the freedom to reshuffle the experiences of the wakeful state. Dream and the wakeful state do actually negate each other. Because of this fact man need not attach too much importance to his acquisitions in the wakeful state. His goal in life is to transcend both of them.

To the Knower of Truth the wakeful state is as much a dream as the dreamy state itself.

— *Vedānta*

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November 16

X-RAY

Man has contrived many rare instruments to probe into the working of Nature. The X-ray reveals the inner physical structure of Man.

But no physical instrument can directly detect the working of the mind. Its intricacies are known to itself. Introspection is the only process of probing into it. That man alone who dives deep into his own mind can analyse it properly and bring it under control.

A rare man turns his attention in and beholds the inner Self.

— *Vedānta*

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November 17

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

People believe that there is in nature a mysterious stone which converts base metal into gold.

The search for the philosopher's stone is ceaseless. In other words people want a short cut to achieve all they want. The effort they ever put in for this purpose is incalculable. But making the mind practical and persevering is the only sure way of obtaining that supposed all powerful substance.

The saint's mind is the real philosopher's stone. Contact with it converts the base man into the good one.

— *Tāyumānavar*

November 18

THE SOURCE

Everything in Nature has its source. Living contact with the source maintains the freshness of beings. The root is the source of the tree.

It is the source that supplies the river constantly with water. The sun beam is the source of life on earth. The utility of sunlight requires to be maintained. The new-born ones are nourished by the parents. That contact is indispensable.

Shut out the senses and be established in the Self, the Source of Life and Bliss.

— Vedānta

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November 19

RAPTURES

A river in spate is at the point of breaching the banks. Emotional tides sometimes spring up in the devotees of God.

Rare is the ecstatic love of the Divine that overtakes a devotee. Then his hairs stand on end with joy. Tears of bliss trickle down his cheeks. The body trembles with fervour. The voice is choked up with feeling. The devotee becomes the embodiment of the Divine.

To go into raptures, to dance for joy, to sing in ecstasy, to stand still in thrill—these are the ways of those caught up with Divine Love.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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November 20

THE FLOWER

What the flower is to the plant man ought to be to society. There is fulfilment in both.

The flower has a universal message. It reveals the higher possibilities in the plant. It appeals to the sense of sight and that of smell. It inspires man with noble ideas. It reminds him of the glory of the Maker. It provides the bee with honey.

When man's heart is made as perfect as a flower it becomes the seat of Divinity.

— *Vedānta*

November 21

MIXTURE

This world is a mixture of good and evil. Nothing in it is absolutely good and nothing absolutely bad. Based on circumstances a thing becomes good or bad.

Mighty men have time and again come into this world and wrought great reformations and improvements. Still the world goes on in its own way of being a mixture of virtue and wickedness. It is at best a good training ground.

Wise men are not enamoured of this world; nor are they indifferent to it. They serve it earnestly without being involved in it.

— *Mahābhārata*

November 22

THE SCULPTOR

The sculptor takes a block of stone and carves a handsome human figure out of it. He infuses life into it as it were.

Nature is the great sculptor. A cosmos is shaped out of chaos. This cosmos beams with life. Every little particle in it has its individuality and elegance. Life at all levels displays its grandeur. A greater sculptor than Nature does not exist. Nature and God are one and the same.

Every soul sculptures its own career. The external aids are of secondary importance.

— *Vedānta*

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November 23

DESIRE

It is desire when a man seeks to own what is not his own. Desire is the motive power that drives man into the meshes of life.

Desire is constantly shifting. In baby-hood the desire is for toys. In childhood it is for play. In adolescence it is for adornment. In maturity it is for mating. In ripe age it is for acquisition. In old age it is for preserving life. The desire for deathlessness is constant.

When a man abandons all the desires of the heart and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, then he is said to be one stable in wisdom.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

November 24

THE GREAT RITUAL

The ritual is the concrete expression of the abstract ideal. Adoration of the Almighty is a spiritual urge. Feeling His Presence in a symbol and prostrating before Him is a ritual.

Every religion has its codified rituals. Worship becomes vague without them. Man is the greatest symbol of the Cosmic Reality. Associating with him with dignity and regard is the great ritual. Artificial barriers such as nationality, language, creed and birth should be eschewed.

The lovers of humanity are the real lovers of God. Their eminence is patent in this world.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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November 25

NATURE'S SWORD

The dual aspects of kindness and rigidity are in evidence in Nature. She never spares the delinquent.

Man-made laws can be averted or dodged with impunity. But the Laws of Nature are inviolable. Man cannot hide them from his conscience. Every little transgression has its repercussion in the form of pain and misery. No tribulation comes to him undeservedly.

At the point of the sword Nature dictates good conduct to man. Misery comes to him the moment he deviates.

— *Vedānta*

November 26

SERVICE

Beings are intrinsically interlinked though they are not aware of it. Warm service to one another sanctifies that relationship.

Opportunity presents itself to us to be of some service to the fellow being. Do not miss that rare occasion. Politely place yourself at the disposal of the person requiring your help. Do your bit and withdraw instantly. You evolve in divinity thereby.

All beings have come from the Cosmic Reality. Service to them is therefore equivalent to the adoration of the Almighty.

— *Tāyumānavar*

November 27

PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

O, the ageless Consciousness, thou art ever pure. Therefore thou art common to all.

That which does not mix with another retains its purity. When two or more things get mixed up they lose their original purity. Consciousness has nothing to mix with. There is nothing akin to it. Therefore it is always pure. Man's original state is Pure Consciousness.

Pure Consciousness is enshrined in the celestials
Pure Consciousness is enshrined in the demons
Pure Consciousness is enshrined in the mortals
Pure Consciousness is therefore sought by me.

— Tirumūlar

November 28

THE TRIFLE

There is no trifle in the Creation. The seeming little thing is great in its place. The recognition of this fact leads to the adoration of the Almighty.

The sum total of the mite is the mighty universe. The structure of the sun is in a spark too. If an atom goes wrong the universe will be upset. But it never goes wrong. Man should not go wrong if he wants to reflect the godly grandeur in himself.

Lord, grant me the sight to see your splendour even in the smallest speck.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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November 29

INSIGHT

Seeing the external lights such as the sun, moon, stars and fire is common to all. But there is a higher faculty too.

Insight is the higher faculty. It is to be cultivated. Reflection is the means for it. Happenings have to be reviewed. Their merits and demerits are to be pondered over. A calm and balanced mind is able to see into the naked truth. And that is insight.

Insight is a divine gift. It is developed through holy living.

— Vedānta

November 30

EASY OF COMPREHENSION

As the sun is blazing in the sky God is blazing in the heart. All that man has to do is to be absorbed in Him.

The holy ones have shown the path to that Holy Presence. That revelation requires no commentary. It is self-evident. Even the ignorant and the babes get access to It. Speech mars Its glory. It is a matter of Being. Silent absorption suffices. Supreme Beatitude blazes.

Mind is made placid as a rippleless lake. Ego is dissolved in it. The Self shines in its Splendour.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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December 1

THE VIGIL

The difference between man and man is in the degree of wakefulness. The lowest man is like a stone. The topmost man is up and doing.

The sleeping man among the seemingly wakeful behaves like an automaton. The dreaming man is somewhat agile. The really wakeful man is alert and active. He keeps vigil and executes his work with keenness. The man endowed with vigil shines in life.

Be alone, be vigilant, be longing for beatitude. You are sure to progress.

— *Vedānta*

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December 2

BEAMING WITH LIGHT

Man's evolution ranges from the state of inertia to that of enlightenment. All types in Nature are in man too.

In the physical make up we distinguish man from the other beings. But in the stuff within, man is an epitome of the entire creation. In the human form there are stones, serpents, tigers, doves, deer, men and angels too. The behaviour and the light within indicate man's attainments.

When the light of knowledge beams through the entire person he is heading for enlightenment.

— *Vedānta*

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December 3

HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT

The majority of people are lopsided in their mental development. An all-rounder is rare to be found.

An all-round development of man constitutes three factors. Efficiency is the first factor. Man must be able to translate into action what he finds good. He must love all beings since they are of the same origin. This is the second factor. He must be able to understand the truth governing existence. This is the third and final factor.

A harmonious development of the hand, heart and head is the mark of a model man.

— *Vivekānanda*

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December 4

NEVER TOO LATE

Urgent work keeps one engaged almost all through the night. That one does not say that it is too late to go to bed. Sleep is essential though belated it is.

What sleep is to the body and mind holy communion is to the self. Charging the self with divinity has not been done life long. Still it is not too late in the advanced stage. New chapter in life begins when one takes to awakening the dormant spiritual consciousness. It is like bringing light to a room kept long in darkness.

Man is never too late for spiritual awakening. Being enlightened even at the death-hour he gains union with Brahman.

— *Vedānta*

December 5

VIGOUR

Vigour it is that aids one achieve great things in life. It is inherent in man. It requires to be roused up.

Seeing a snake pursuing him a fatigued old man takes to his heels. The vigour to do so comes from within. This is due to desperateness born of emergency. But vigour can be permanently invoked in the normal life. A vigorous man is always up and doing good. Vigour builds while fidgetiness wastes energy.

Vigour is the spontaneous outcome of one being wakeful to the divine element in oneself.

— *Mahābhārata*

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December 6

THE LAMP OF WISDOM

O you the blissful Light, light up the lamp of shining wisdom in my heart.

Discrimination is the lamp of wisdom. Devotion is the oil. Communion with God is the pure air to foster the lamp. Consciousness born of continence is the wick. Desireless heart is the lamp stand. It is protected against the wind of greed. The Lord's Presence is the flame of that lamp.

Raise up the lamp of wisdom and light it. Kindle up its flame. With the aid of the Light see the Light. Be immersed in that Light.

— *Tirumūlar*

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December 7

THE TORCH

Conscience is the torch enshrined in the heart. Glimmering though it is, it is ever infallible. Guided by it man never goes wrong.

In the pitch dark night a long distance has to be traversed. A torch in hand shows only a few steps ahead. It quite serves the purpose. Neither the destination nor the long way needs be seen entirely. Even so conscience indicates the thing to be done immediately. If faithfully followed it makes life a success.

As the torch guides the wayfarer may conscience lead me to the Reality.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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December 8

SELF-CONTROL

The difference between self-control and self-indulgence can be found by experiment. The one leads to integration and the other to disintegration.

An imprisoned man's body is placed under restriction. But mentally he is wandering about. He cannot be said to be a man of self-control. It is self-control when the mind is poised in the self, when it delights in the self and when it is wholly devoted to the self.

The man of self-control grows in exuberance. He develops intuition. He realizes he is Atman.

— *Vedānta*

December 9

FORBEARANCE

The man who retaliates finds immediate pleasure. The man who forbears finds lasting pleasure.

A holy man seated on the brink of the Ganges at Hrishikesh noticed a scorpion floating down. He held out his hand and saved it. The creature stung him. A violent jerk made by him threw it into the river. He saved it for the second time. It stung him again. This time he threw it on land. This is forbearance.

Forbearance is characteristic of a saint. He does not return evil for evil.

— *Tiruvalluvar*

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December 10

THE SOARING HEIGHT

When we soar high up in the air the ups and downs on the earth disappear. Instead a vast expanse is perceived. Such is also the case when we soar mentally.

All pettiness dissolves to the one who soars intellectually. All barriers of social customs and usages disappear from him who soars in universalism. Bigotry and fanaticism are overcome by him. Nationalism and castism are cast aside by the one who soars in humanism.

Multiplicity vanishes in the sublime height of the knowledge of Brahman.

— *Vedānta*

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December 11

NIGHT

Night suspends the physical activities, but it is no hindrance to Consciousness which is constant Awareness.

In the pitch dark night nothing is visible. Man is not able to see his own body. The dust fallen on it is not cognized. Still the self cognizes itself. It requires no external light. This inner light is a spark of the Cosmic Light. Night cannot veil it.

Lord, may I be anchored in the Self which remains unaffected by night or day.

— *Tāyumānavar*

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December 12

THE SPIRITUAL SUCCOUR

Beings are so constituted that they stand in need of nourishment. Elements of nature are the sources of nourishment.

Man cannot live for more than a few minutes without air. When he is deprived of water he will perish in a few days. If no food is given he will die in a few weeks. While all these are his daily bread, enlightenment becomes intellectual food for life. Above all, spiritual realization leads him to Immortality.

When man realizes he is Atman he no more stands in need of succour.

— *Vedānta*

December 13

WITHIN

When it rains, when storm sets in, when night comes man keeps within. That act is a physical necessity for self protection.

Being drawn within has several purposes. Birds and beasts keep to themselves in illness. Man withdraws within for repose. Repose is involuntary and retreat voluntary. To go within for spiritual illumination is the best and most profitable act that man can do. The knowing man is steady in the practice of it.

He whose happiness is within, whose delight is within, whose illumination is within only, that yogi becomes Brahman and gains the Beatitude of Brahman.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

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December 14

MISERY

Man does not want misery. He tries to eliminate it. Thereby indirectly he seeks godhood which is beyond misery.

The pupil not good at studies feels miserable in the school. Similarly in the school of this world those who are not able to behave properly come by misery. Evil is its seed. Evil thought and evil act are one and the same. The maladjustment of the mind manifests itself as misery.

The bliss of the Self blurred by the impure mind is misery. The bliss of the Self reveals itself as such in the pure mind.

— *Vedānta*

December 15

GOOD AND EVIL

This world is constituted of good and evil. But people want to have all good and no evil. That dream would not materialize.

Nothing in this world is absolutely good and nothing absolutely bad. Everything is a mixture of good and evil. Rain renews life and it is welcome. But it also destroys life. Death is bad; but it maintains the newness of the world.

He who is unattached everywhere, who is not delighted at receiving good nor dejected at coming by evil, is poised in wisdom.

— *Bhagavad Gita*

December 16

THE SEARCH

All beings are in search of one thing or another. There is no respite in this respect. From birth to death ceaselessly the search is going on. Can there ever be an end to it ?

The search for sustenance is common to all. The search for security is also evident everywhere. Here and there we come across people who are in search of wealth, knowledge, quietude and congenial company. The search for happiness is again universal.

At the core man is existence, knowledge, bliss. In his ignorance he searches for them in the external world.

— *Vedānta*

December 17

THE WAYFARER

Man ought to remember he is only a wayfarer in this world. The thought of this fact solves many problems in life.

The traveller should not dirty the road. If possible he may cleanse it. The road may be utilized but there should be no claim of ownership of it. This world is the highway. Make progress in it without stagnation. Wretched is he who thinks of permanent settlement here.

O mind, you have come into this world for training. Receive it in plenty and hasten to the feet of the Lord, your Goal.

— Tāyumānavar

December 18

THE TEACHER

The scope for learning is immense. Every individual is an unconscious teacher. Through his bearing he teaches the others.

The world is a school. Classes in it are innumerable. Teachers are countless. Lessons are being taught day and night. Students may attend any class for any length of time. Not only man, but also facts such as poverty, prosperity, good, evil, happiness and misery are all teachers. Some of them are able to teach very quickly.

Lord, you are constantly clarifying my mind which is prone to confusion.

— Tāyumānavar

December 19

THE DIRECT GRASP

Nobody has yet directly seen his own face. He has only seen its photographic semblance and its reflection in the mirror.

Happiness derived from the things external is actually the Bliss of the Self apparently imposed on them. The tongue helps the transfer of Self-bliss on the delicacies. The eye imposes the beauty of the Self on the form outside. Whatever happiness derived from the sense-objects is indeed in the Self.

When the mind is stilled there is the direct grasp of the Bliss in the Self.

— *Vedānta*

December 20

INTOXICATION

Intoxication is of two kinds. One pertains to liquor and the other to spiritual fervour. The former is mundane and the latter godly.

Between the two intoxications there are a few common points. Gaining vigour is the first point. Getting rid of sorrow is the second point. Being dead to worldly concerns is a great gain. Alcoholic intoxication has its adverse after-effect. Whereas spiritual intoxication is divinizing.

There is a graceful sweetness in the intoxication created by spiritual fervour.

— Tāyumānavar

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December 21

THE TREASURE

As the treasures of the earth are dug out, even so the more I brood on the Divine the more I get at It.

Your body is perishable. But do you know how much potentiality is inherent in it? Ages have passed away since man has inherited the earth. While he has unearthed a good deal of the earthly treasures the spiritual treasure in himself remains untapped. If you dive deep into yourself, you are bound to explore the imperishable spiritual treasure.

In ignorance I neglected the body. I find it a spiritual treasure chest. So I take good care of it.

— Tirumūlar

December 22

THE PANACEA

There is no end to problems in life. There is also no end to temptations in the world. Some fall victims to both and ruin themselves.

A man gets entangled in all the pitfalls of life. He runs into debts, neglects the family, creates enemies and commits endless sins. If such a man takes to the spiritual path he suddenly transforms himself. Spirituality is the panacea for all the evils and entanglements in life.

Even if a man of the most sinful conduct worships the Divine with undeviating devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous, for he has rightly resolved

— Bhagavad Gita

December 23

THE DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS

I am soaked in worldly thoughts. Therefore the world is hanging heavy on me. May I change over to the divine consciousness and thus save myself.

No two conflicting thoughts engage the mind simultaneously. Any one thought eliminates all other thoughts. By resorting to the divine consciousness all the other thoughts are wiped out.

Gold is hidden in the ornament.
Gold remains when ornament is destroyed.
Self is concealed in mentation.
Self is evident when mentation stops.

— Tirumūlar

December 24

THE TRIUMPH

The seeming impossible becomes possible as one marches along the path of life. Nothing succeeds like success.

As one adjusts oneself, one finds calmness within. Fear, anger, envy, greed, lust —these have been the causes of the internal disturbances. These are greater enemies than the external ones. The triumph consists in evicting them once for all.

My triumph becomes superb when I annihilate the mind.

— *Tāyumānavar*

December 25

THE INNER VOICE

The greatest guidance that man has is the inner voice. Its mandate is ever ready. Fortunate is the man who listens to it.

Man is used to the voices of the world. He is also adding his voice to them. He is therefore a stranger to silence. He is to hush his own voice and be dead to the external sound. Then he becomes competent to hear the inner voice. Communion with the inner voice calms the mind.

Conscience is the inner voice. Without tongue it utters. Independent of the ears man hears it. Its utterance is infallible.

— Vedānta

December 26

EMPTY WORDS

Either I shall utter elevating words or I shall hold my tongue. I shall not blab empty words.

Man depraves himself by indulging in empty words. To be wordy is a mark of shallowness. Verbal indulgence wears away man. He becomes incapable of thinking great thoughts. A man of action speaks less. And whatever he utters is meaningful.

Lord, you are indicated by one word. Heaping words is a mark of emptiness.

— *Tāyumānavar*

December 27

BUDDHA'S MIRACLE

To plead with a Master for the performance of a miracle is the way of the ordinary man.

A young widow who lost her only little son wailed bitterly before Buddha to bring the dead to life. He calmly asked her to procure some mustard from any house where death had not taken place. In vain she searched for a death-free house and submitted her experience: death had taken place everywhere.

" What happens to all has happened to your son" said Buddha with compassion. The widow was consoled. Revealing the truth was Buddha's miracle. It is useful to all at all times.

— The Way of Buddha

December 28

FORGIVENESS

The practice of forgiveness is not given to all. On the contrary harping on the wrongs done to them is the way of the worldly people.

It requires both strength and large-heartedness to forgive the offender. The petty-minded man finds pleasure in retaliating upon his enemy. The magnanimous man forgives and forgets. The good turn that he does reforms the wrong-doer.

A hero never gets offended at the greatest offence against him. Forgiveness is characteristic of him.

— *Mahābhārata*

December 29

GENEROSITY

The law of life is inviolable. To the man who practises generosity more things come in spontaneously. But to the niggard the inflow is scant.

The habituated giver never denies even in scarcity. He is very much like the dried up river. Its surface is all sandy waste. But dig a hole and water oozes out. Even in a strained situation a benefactor willingly doles out his mite.

Generosity is a divine trait. They alone own it who are cultured in exuberance.

— *Mahābhārata*

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December 30

VACUUM

Nature abhors vacuum. As one thing is vacated from it, another thing enters. Man must learn what to vacate from his mind.

That man is a yogi who is able to create vacuum in his mind. The more he creates vacuum the more he gains in divinity. When all the assumed dispositions are eliminated a vacuum seems to have been created. Unalloyed Awareness remains in its absolute clarity.

Pure Consciousness is perfect in Itself. Nothing can be added to It. Nothing can be removed from It. No vacuum can be created in It.

— *Vedānta*

December 31

EMANCIPATION

Beings resent restriction in whatever form it may be imposed. Entanglement brings misery and emancipation joy.

Man meets with obstacles at every stage in life. Disease, want, social convention—these are the common barriers. Epidemic, famine, catastrophe, war—these are uncommon barriers. Above all death is an eternal problem. Nature as a whole is a shackle to him. The urge for emancipation is constant.

The knower of Atman gets emancipation from all the limitations of the phenomenal existence.

— *Vedānta*

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AWAKENED CONSCIOUSNESS

We know the difference between sleep and wakefulness. Consciousness is latent in the former and patent in the latter.

There is a spiritually awakened state. Compared with it the normal wakeful state amounts to sleep. In that extraordinary state Consciousness gets intensified. The personality becomes all-powerful. Awareness is at its zenith. It is the blazing Bliss. Attaining that state there is nothing further to attain.

Man is only a sleeping self until the Consciousness is fully awakened in him.

— Vedānta

TRANSCEND THE TRIPLE

The self merges in Paramatman when he transcends the triple disposition — sattva, rajas and tamas.

The self merges in Paramatman when he transcends the limitations called the triple– the seer, the seen and the process of seeing.

The self merges in Paramatman when he transcends the triple factors called time, space and causation.

— Vedānta

SPACE IN THE POT

Cosmic Consciousness is static like cosmic space.

Individual consciousness moves even as the space in the pot seems to move. Space in the pot is none other than the cosmic space.

Individual consciousness is none other than the Cosmic Consciousness seemingly encased.

When the pot is broken space remains unaffected. The individual's individuality vanishes. But Consciousness remains ever the same. Man is not the body. Man is Consciousness.

— Vedānta

INFINITY

Finitude is apparent. Infinitude is Reality.

Infinity is Absolute Reality or Pure Consciousness. The Relative Reality or the Immanent Reality has come from the Absolute Reality. Its original Infinitude is not thereby affected. Man is That.

Man may transcend his assumed finitude and merge in the Infinitude of the Absolute Reality. And that is Brahma-nirvāna.

— Vedānta

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GLOSS

BHAGAVATA one of the eighteen mythologies in Hinduism. It deals with devotion.

MAHABHARATA is the second Hindu Epic. It contains the Bhagavad Gita. It is the biggest book known to mankind.

RAMAKRISHNA (1836-1886) The rejuvenator of Hinduism in the middle of the ninteenth century.

TAYUMANAVAR belonged to the seventeenth century A. D. A saint of Vedantic lore. His literature is in Tamil.

TIRUMULAR — An ancient sage. He composed in Tamil three thousand verses of four lines each on matters spiritual.

TIRUVALLUVAR — A sage of the second century A. D. He is the celebrated author of Kural in Tamil. This book deals with *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*.

VEDANTA are the teachings of the Upanishads. They form the core of Hinduism.

VIVEKANANDA (1863-1902) The chief apostle of Ramakrishna.